







THE
CHINESE EMPIRE.

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THE
CHINESE EMPIRE:

FORMING A SEQUEL TO THE WORK

ENTITLED

“RECOLLECTIONS OF A JOURNEY THROUGH TARTARY
AND THIBET.”

BY M. HUC,
FORMERLY MISSIONARY APOSTOLIC IN CHINA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Dangerous Illness. — Mandarins' Prescriptions. — Visit of the Doctor. — Theory of the Pulse. — Apothecaries in China. — Trade in Medicine. — Increase of the Malady. — Acupuncture. — The Supernatural Treasure of Red Pills. — Experimental Medicine. — Origin and History of the Cholera in China. — Free Practice of Medicine. — Good Effects of Red Pills. — Cure. — Terrible Law of Responsibility. — Tragic Story. — Kind Attention of the Prefect of Kuen-kiang-hien. — Fondness of the Chinese for Coffins. — Journey of a Sick Man by the Side of his Bier. — Calmness and Tranquillity of the Chinese at the Moment of Death. — Visit to our Coffin. — Departure from Kuen-kiang-hien. - PAGE 1

CHAP. II.

Visit of the Mandarins of Tien-men. — Their Attention to us. — Fame of Tien-men for the Number and Beauty of its Water-melons. — Extensive Use of the Water-melon Seed. — Caustic Humour of a Young Military Mandarin. — The Inhabitants of Sse-tchouen treated as Strangers in the Province of Hou-pé. — Prejudices of Europeans with regard to Chinese. — The Manner in which most Works on China are composed. — True View of the supposed Immobility of the Orientals. — Revolutions in the Chinese Empire. — Socialist School in the Eleventh Century. — Account of their System. — Long and severe Struggle. — Transportation of Tartar Agitators. — Causes of the Barbarian Invasions. - 40

CHAP. III.

Arrival at Han-tchouan. — Custom of presenting a Pair of Boots to a disgraced Mandarin. — Placards and Advertisements. — Privileges and Liberty enjoyed by the Chinese. — Association against Gamblers. — Society of the Old Bull. — Liberty of the Press. — Public Lectures. —

1451629

European Prejudice concerning the Despotism of Asiatic Governments. — Carelessness of Magistrates. — Remembrance of the Sufferings of the Venerable Perboyre. — Navigation of a Lake. — Floating Islands. — Population of China. — Its Causes and Dangers. — Cormorant Fishing. — Some Details of Chinese Manners. — Bad Reception at Han-yang. — We follow a wrong Course. — Passage of the Yang-tse-kiang. — Arrival at Ou-tchang-fou - - - - PAGE 72

CHAP. IV.

Bad Lodging in a Little Pagoda. — Ou-tchang-fou, Capital of Hou-pé. — Limits of the Chinese Empire. — Mountains. — Rivers. — Lakes. — Climate. — Principal Productions. — Chinese Industry. — Causes of its Decline. — Former Exhibitions of the Productions of Arts. — Relations of the Chinese with Foreigners. — Present State of their Commerce with Europeans. — Internal Trade of China. — Interest of Money. — System of Chinese Economists upon Interest of Thirty per cent. — Pecuniary Societies. — Immense Commercial Mart in the Centre of the Empire. — System of Canals. — Aptitude of the Chinese for Commerce. — Monetary System. — Influence of the Sapeck. — Infinitesimal Trade. - - - - 110

CHAP. V.

Attempt to see the Governor of the Province. — We force the Guard of his Palace. — The Governor of Hou-pé. — Conversation with this exalted Personage. — Good result of the Visit. — Moving. — Courtesy of a Cook. — Adieus of Master Ting, and the Sse-tehouen escort. — The Mandarin Lieou, or the “Weeping Willow,” Chief of the New Escort. — Chinese Architecture. — Towers. — Pagodas. — Fine Arts. — Religion. — Doctrine of the Literary Class. — Great Honours rendered to Confucius. — Doctors of Reason. — Life and Opinions of the Philosopher Lao-tze. — Buddhism. — Legend of Buddha. — Dogmas and Moral Precepts. — Buddhists persecuted by the Brahmins. — Causes of these Persecutions. — Dispersion of the Buddhists through the various Countries of Asia. - - - - 152

CHAP. VI.

All Religions condemned by the Chinese Government. — Formulas of Scepticism. — Condition of the Bonzes of China. — Buddhist Monasteries. — Religious Architecture. — Temple of Pou-Tou. — Library of the Monastery. — Visit to the Superior of the Bonzes. — Profound Respect of the Chinese for Writing. — Convent of Bonzesses. — Ceremonies to recal the Souls of the Dying when they are escaping. — Death of a Young Bachelor. — Mourning of the Chinese. — Singular Mode of

| | |
|--|----------|
| Lamenting the Dead. — Interments — Worship of Ancestors. — Chinese Classification of Various Ages of Life. — Marriage in China. — Servitude of Women. — Discord in Domestic Life. — Examples. — Sect of Abstinent Women. | PAGE 195 |
|--|----------|

CHAP. VII.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Departure from the Capital of Hou-pé. — Farewell Visit to the Governor of the Town. — Burial of the Two Martyrs. — State of Christianity in Hou-pé. — Disagreeable Incidents on the Road. — No Provisions in a Town of the Third Order. — Visit to the Palace of the Town Prefect. — Treatment of Criminals. — Horrible Details of a Trial. — The Kouan-kouen, or Chinese Bandit. — Mode of Administering Justice. — Code of Laws. — General Considerations upon Chinese Legislation. — Penal and Materialistic Character of the Code. — Defect of Precision in Certain Laws. — Principle of Solidarity. — Laws relating to Officers of Government. — Organisation of the Family. — Repression of Crime. — Ritual Laws. — Taxes and Territorial Property | 237 |
|--|-----|

CHAP. VIII.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Departure from Kouang-tsi-hien. — Storm. — Government Couriers. — Mode of Epistolary Correspondence. — Grand Festival at Hoang-mei-hien. — Fireworks. — Chinese Music. — Idea we ought to have of the Music of the Ancient Chinese. — Imperial Road to Peking. — The Roads in China. — Halt upon the Borders of Lake Pouyang. — Embarcation. — Kakkerlaes on board the Junk. — Glance over the Province of Hou-pé. — Agriculture in China. — Imperial Festival of Labour. — Details concerning Agriculture. — Agricultural Productions. — The Bamboo. — The Water Lily. — Imperial Rice. — Observant Character of the Chinese. — Classification of Corn. — What becomes of the Swallows during Winter. — Manner of making a Cat tell the Time. — Method of Hindering Asses from Braying. | 278 |
|--|-----|

CHAP. IX.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Navigation of the Pou-yang. — Great Number of Junks. — Desert Tracts. — Pauperism in China. — Bands of Mendicants. — Society for Gratuitous Coffins. — The King of the Beggars. — The Hens' Feathers Inn. — Causes of Pauperism. — Gaming. — Various Chinese Games. — Mode of Studying the Law against Gamblers. — Drunkenness. — The Vine, Wine, and Corn Brandy. — Infanticide. — Its Causes. — Truth and Exaggeration concerning Infanticide in China. — Yu-yung-tang, or Foundling Hospital. — Edict against Infanticide. — Work of the Society of the Holy Infancy. | 320 |
|--|-----|

CHAP. X.

Uncultivated Tracts in the Province of Kiang-si. — The Guard-house. — The Vinegar Polypus. — The Mandarin and his Steed. — Theft of Water-melons. — Arrival at Nan-tchang-fou. — Mode of Installing Oneself in the Palace of Literary Composition. — Solemn Public Supper. — Disappointment of the Spectators. — Visit of the Prefect of the Town. — A Mongol Mandarin. — His Geographical Knowledge. — Labours of the Protestant Methodists in China. — Chinese Astronomers. — Aspect of the Capital of Kiang-si. — Manufacture of Porcelain. — Chinese Antiquaries. — Origin of the God of Porcelain. — Pisciculture in Kiang-si. — New Travelling Arrangements. - PAGE 357

CHAP. XI.

Departure from Nan-tchang-fou. — A Mandarin Junk. — Comfort and Luxury of Water-carriage. — Vehicles and Hotels. — Fiacre and Cabriolet Stands at Peking. — Chinese Light Literature. — Collections of Maxims and Proverbs. — Passage of the Mountain Mei-ling. — Nanhiong, the Frontier Town. — Chinese Rope Dancers. — Little Feet of the Women. — Origin of this Custom. — Navigation of the Tigris. — Recollections of our Entry into China in 1840. — View of the Port of Canton. — European Vessels. — First Night in Canton. — Our Martyrdom in Tartary. — Savings on the Road bestowed upon our Servant Wei-chan. — Stay at Macao. — Death of M. Gabet. — Departure for Peking. — Arrival at Marseilles in 1852. - - - 386

THE
CHINESE EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

DANGEROUS ILLNESS. — MANDARINS' PRESCRIPTIONS. — VISIT OF THE DOCTOR. — THEORY OF THE PULSE. — APOTHECARIES IN CHINA. — TRADE IN MEDICINE.—INCREASE OF THE MALADY.—ACUPUNCTURE.—THE SUPERNATURAL TREASURE OF RED PILLS. — EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE. — ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE CHOLERA IN CHINA. — FREE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE. — GOOD EFFECTS OF RED PILLS. — CURE. — TERRIBLE LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY. — TRAGIC STORY. — KIND ATTENTION OF THE PREFECT OF KUEN-KIANG-HIEN. — FONDNESS OF THE CHINESE FOR COFFINS. — JOURNEY OF A SICK MAN BY THE SIDE OF HIS BIER.—CALMNESS AND TRANQUILLITY OF THE CHINESE AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH. — VISIT TO OUR COFFIN. — DEPARTURE FROM KUEN-KIANG-HIEN.

It is common to say that health is the greatest blessing possessed by man here below; and in fact the enjoyments of this life are so fragile and fugitive, that they all vanish at the approach of the slightest infirmity. But for the exile, for the traveller, wandering in distant lands, health is not merely a good—it is a quite inestimable treasure—for it is a mournful and bitter thing to be attacked by illness in a foreign

country, far from relations or friends, and surrounded by persons to whom you are a source of annoyance, and who only regard you with indifference, or even with aversion. What a frightful and desperate situation would it be for one who counted only on the help of man, and had the misfortune of not knowing how to find in God his support and consolation.

Our long journey—so full of vicissitudes of every kind—had hitherto been at least free from this trial. In Tartary and Thibet we had been threatened with being starved or frozen to death, devoured by wild beasts, murdered by robbers, or crushed by the fall of avalanches; a single step would often have been sufficient to plunge us from the top of a mountain into a frightful abyss.

In China, executioners had displayed before us the instruments of their atrocious tortures; an angry populace had risen in insurrection around us; and, finally, a tempest had nearly engulfed us in the waters. After having so often had death under various forms so near us, it only remained to see him standing quietly at our bed-foot, ready to take possession in the most ordinary forms of a prey that had so often escaped him, and for two whole days it pleased God to leave before our eyes this melancholy vision.

On the very evening of our arrival at *Kuen-kiang-hien*, and whilst we were receiving the visit of the principal magistrates of the town, we were suddenly seized with violent vomitings, accompanied by most acute pains in the stomach. It seemed really as if a general decomposition were going on in our frame, from head to foot; and we were forced to go to bed. The doctor was sent for; the most renowned doctor, it was said, of the whole

country; a man accustomed to perform prodigies, and cure with the greatest ease all sorts of incurable maladies. Whilst waiting the arrival of this marvellous doctor, in whom we were far from feeling the most absolute confidence, the mandarins of our escort, and those of Kuen-kiang-hien, discoursed with much learning and *sang-froid* on the cause of our illness, and the means to be employed for its cure.

We have said that the Chinese were, in virtue of their temperament, essentially actors and cooks; we may add also that they are something of doctors. Every one of the company delivered his opinion of our condition in the most technical terms, and it was settled by the obliging members of this impromptu consultation that our "noble and illustrious malady proceeded from a disturbance in the equilibrium of the vital spirits." The igneous principle, they thought, too long fed by the excessive heat, had ended by exceeding beyond all measure the proper bounds assigned to it, and that, consequently, a fire, so to speak, had been kindled in the sublime organisation of our body. Consequently also the aqueous elements had been dried up to such a degree that there no longer remained to the members and organs the humidity necessary to the performance of their natural functions; thence proceeded those vomitings, those pains in the stomach, and that generally disordered state which it was easy to perceive in our face, and which produced such violent contortions.

In order to re-establish the said equilibrium there needed only to be introduced into the body a certain quantity of cold, and to lower the extravagant temperature of this igneous principle; therefore it was necessary to favour the return of moisture into all the members. In

this manner health would be immediately re-established, and we might resume our journey; being, however, very careful not to permit the igneous principle to develop itself to the point of absorbing the aqueous principle. There was a very simple method of bringing back into the body this beautiful harmony. Everybody knew that green peas are of an extremely cold nature; a certain quantity was therefore to be put on to boil, we were to drink the liquor, and by that means the fire would be put out.

A mandarin of Kuen-kiang-hien suggested that nevertheless we must use this liquor with great moderation for fear of occasioning too great a chill; but Master Ting interposed, saying that we might, without any danger, take twice the ordinary dose of it, as he had remarked that our temperament was incomparably warmer than that of a Chinese. It was also decided that for this purpose of restoring the humidity necessary for the harmonious action of the organs, there was nothing better than boiled cucumbers and water melons.

It was finally therefore agreed unanimously, that nothing more was necessary than green peas, boiled cucumbers, and water melons, to set us on our feet again, and enable us to pursue our journey; and in the meantime the doctor arrived. The ceremonious, yet perfectly easy manner in which he presented himself pointed him out as a man who passed his time in paying visits. He was a little roundabout man with a pleasing countenance, and of a redundant plumpness calculated to afford the most advantageous ideas of his hygienic principles: and a pair of great spectacles seated on a very little rudimentary kind of nose, and

tied behind his ears with a silk cord, gave him quite a finished medical air. A small grey beard and moustachies, and hair of the same colour tied behind in a pig-tail, afforded additional evidence of long experience in the art of healing. As he approached our bed, he gave utterance to some aphorisms that did not seem to us altogether worthless.

“I have learned,” said he, “that the illustrious patient was born in the countries of the west. It is written in the books that maladies vary according to the country; those of the north do not resemble those of the south; every nation has some that are peculiar to it, and every country produces particular remedies, adapted to the ordinary infirmities of its inhabitants. The skilful physician ought to distinguish different temperaments, in order to understand the true character of maladies and prescribe suitable medicaments; it is in this that his science consists. We must take good care not to treat the men of the Western Seas in the same manner as the men of the central nation.” After having laid down these principles, with very striking inflections of voice, and abundance of gesticulation, he drew towards him a bamboo arm-chair and seated himself by the side of our bed. He then asked for our right arm, and having laid it on a small cushion he began to feel the pulse by playing on it with all his fingers as if he were playing the pianoforte. The Chinese consider that there are different pulses corresponding to the heart, the liver, and the other principal organs. To feel the pulse well you must feel them all one after the other, and sometimes several together, in order to understand their several relations. During this operation, which lasted a very long while, the doctor

appeared plunged in profound meditation ; he did not speak one word, but kept his head bent down, and his eyes fixed on the points of his shoes.

When the right arm had had its turn, the left was taken, and the same ceremonies performed with it ; and then at length the doctor majestically raised his head, stroked his beard and moustachios two or three times, and pronounced the sentence: "By some means or other," said he, shaking his head, "the cold air has penetrated into the interior, and has put itself in opposition, in many of the organs, with the igneous principle ; thence arises the struggle, which must necessarily manifest itself by vomitings and convulsions ; we must therefore combat the evil with warm substances."

The mandarins, who a minute before had said precisely the contrary, did not fail to agree entirely with the opinion of the physician.

"That's the thing," said Ting: "it is evident there is a struggle between the cold and the heat ; these two principles are not in harmony, and what is wanted is to make them agree ; that's just what we were thinking." The physician then went on: "The nature of this noble malady is such that it may yield with facility to the virtue of the medicines, and disappear very soon ; and, also, it is quite possible that it may resist, and that the danger may increase. This is my opinion on the subject after having studied the various characters of the pulse."

This opinion did not appear to us an extremely hazardous one, or likely in any case to compromise seriously the person who delivered it. "You must have rest and quiet," continued the doctor, and take every hour a dose of the medicine I am going to pre-

scribe." As he spoke he rose, and went to seat himself at a little table, where writing materials had been prepared. The learned man then dipped in a cup of tea the end of a little stick of Indian ink, which he rubbed on a dish of black stone, then seized a pencil, and began to trace the prescription on a large sheet of paper. He wrote a large page, and when he had finished, he took his paper, read it again attentively in a low voice, and then came to us and communicated its contents. He placed the prescription under our eyes, then extending towards it the first finger of his right hand, terminated by a nail of frightful length, he pointed to the characters he had just written, and gave us by degrees a full explanation of them. We did not understand much of what he said, for the violent headache with which we were tormented hindered us from following the thread of his learned dissertation on the properties and virtues of the numerous ingredients that went to compose the medicine; besides, the little attention of which we were capable was entirely absorbed by the sight of that prodigious nail, that went wandering over the mass of Chinese characters. We made out, however, that the basis of the remedy was rhubarb and orange peel, *ta-hoang* and *kapi*; besides these articles, a variety of powders, leaves, and roots, were to enter into its composition. Each kind of drug was specially charged to act on a particular organ, in order to bring about the desired result, and the aggregate of their operations to effect the prompt re-establishment of our health.

It is customary to boil the drugs together in a vase of baked clay; and when the water has, by a long ebullition, sufficiently assimilated their medicinal properties, the patient is made to swallow it as hot as pos-

sible. Chinese medicine is almost always of an oily nature, and of a very dark yellowish colour; this very uninviting appearance proceeds from a certain fatty black substance that the physicians have the good taste to introduce into all their prescriptions; however, if one can get over the unpleasant look of them, these medicines are seldom very difficult to take; they have mostly an insipid sweetish taste, and are never so abominably nauseous as some of the compositions of our European pharmacists, which turn your very heart, and make your whole inner man rise in violent rebellion.

When the Chinese M.D. had fulfilled his mission with respect to our "noble and illustrious malady," and made a number of profound bows to the company, he departed, promising to come back the next morning. The mandarins of Kuen-kiang-hien went also, and in very sorrowful mood, for the physician had said positively that we needed repose, and our condition also seemed bad enough to make it probable that we should have to make a pretty long stay, even if we were not obliged to take up our final abode at the foot of one of their mountains. All these considerations could not but cause them much anxiety.

When all the strangers were gone, Master Ting asked us whether it was necessary to follow the doctor's prescription, and prepare the medicine he had ordered. The fact was, that we had no great confidence either in the drugs or the doctor; but where were we to find a better? To whom could we apply for help in these melancholy circumstances? Only to the great Master of life and death, whom it has pleased to bestow on plants certain marvellous properties, by which they contribute to the solace of human infirmities; He might

therefore grant to these drugs, insignificant as they might be, a special virtue, if it should be his good pleasure that we should recover our health.

In the Holy Scriptures we are told to honour physicians in case of necessity; and we could have no better opportunity for that than the present. Let us therefore, we thought, honour the Chinese doctor, and scrupulously obey his orders. "Yes certainly," we replied to Master Ting's question; the medicine must be prepared as he has ordered.

A servant of the Communal Palace was sent to get the ingredients to the house of the doctor himself, who had just made up the prescription. In China, the physicians are at the same time apothecaries, and sell to their patients the remedies they prescribe; but although these two professions are intimately connected with one another, and in themselves by no means incompatible, there are some objections to their being exercised by the same individual. Some abuses may easily enter into the exercise of functions that support each other so completely—as, for instance, human frailty considered, the physician may yield to the temptation of prescribing costly remedies, or even sometimes of prolonging the malady for the purpose of procuring more considerable profits for his friend the apothecary. The prodigious quantity of drugs that enter into the composition of Chinese medicines has indeed always appeared to us rather surprising; and we would not venture to say that the circumstance is not to be accounted for from the fact we have mentioned of their being prescribed and sold by the same person.

The fear of being fleeced by the doctor has given rise to a curious custom, quite in accordance with Chinese

manners. The physician and the patient usually enter into an earnest discussion concerning the value and price of the medicines ordered. The other members of the family too take part in this odd sort of bargaining; they ask the doctor to prescribe common cheap drugs, and they examine the prescription, and strike out such as are too expensive. Possibly the effect of the medicine may be thereby rendered slow or doubtful, but they will put up with that, and run the risk. They always hope, too, that the alteration will not be of much consequence, and that it will be pretty much the same in the end. In fact, the great recommendation of Chinese practice is, that one prescription is about as good as another, and that whether you absorb a little more or less of their black brewages will probably make very little difference.

The physician, after having haggled for a long time, generally ends by abating something of the price of his merchandise, for the simple reason that if he did not, the patient would go to another shop.

Very surprising and very *Chinese* scenes, however, sometimes occur with reference to these cases. When the physician-apothecary has said his last word, and declared positively that to obtain the cure it is indispensably necessary to make use of this or that remedy, a family council is held, actually in the presence of the sick person, in which the question of life or death is coolly put, and frequently arguments brought forward to show that, considering the advanced age of the patient, or the hopeless nature of the malady, it may be better not to incur a useless expense, but quietly to allow things to take their course. After having closely calculated what it will cost to buy these possibly useless

medicines, it is not uncommon for the sick man himself to take the initiative, and decide that it will be much better to reserve the money to buy a fine coffin, since one must die sooner or later, and it is well worth while to give perhaps a short remnant of life in order to have a handsome funeral. With this sweet and consoling prospect in view, they send away the doctor, and—the sitting being prolonged—send for the undertaker. Such are the thoughts and cares that occupy the mind of a Chinese in the presence of death.

Fortunately for us we had no occasion to enter into these intricate calculations, since it was the business of the mandarins to provide us with medicines, or, in case of need, with a coffin. We were even assured beforehand that they would have the politeness to place us in one of superior quality; and being thus made perfectly easy in our minds on this important point, we had nothing to do but quietly to swallow all the drugs offered to us, without even asking what they cost. Never had a doctor of Kuen-kiang-hien a better patient.

The efficacy of the medicine, however, by no means corresponded with our generosity of behaviour; we cannot say whether it did good or harm, or maintained a prudent neutrality, and left us to get well or not as we thought proper; all that we know is, that on the following morning we were in a very dangerous state. Then came more medicines, and also more illness; a consuming fever; a distracting headache, a dry and burning skin, and fierce pains in the bowels: such were the principal symptoms. The doctor never left us, for the worthy man's pride was now concerned. To find himself engaged in a battle with the astonishing organisation of a devil of the western seas; to vanquish such an

obstinâte, unreasonable, atrocious kind of malady, the like of which had never been seen among the inhabitants of the celestial empire, that would assuredly be a feat that could not fail to cover the doctor with glory. On the following day we did not know much of what was passing in the room we occupied in the Communal Palace of Kuen-kiang-hien. Our brains became a chaos in which France, China, Tartary, and Thibet, were blended and mingled into an inextricable entanglement of all that was absurd and monstrous; persons the most incongruous, too, were brought together by the wild extravagances of our delirious imagination, and made to hold all sorts of impossible conversations. In the evening, however, our understanding became clear enough to make out that the physician was speaking of the operation of *acupuncture*, whereupon we clenched our fist, and looked at him in such fierce wrath, that he drew back in a fright. This manner of explaining our opinion of the matter was not, we must own, quite in accordance with the Rites, but under the circumstances, and seeing that the disease scarcely left us a full consciousness of our actions, it may perhaps be deemed excusable.

This operation of *acupuncture* was invented in China in a period of the remotest antiquity, and afterwards passed into Japan. It is in frequent use in both countries, for the cure of many diseases, and is performed by introducing into the body long metallic needles, the whole science of the operator consisting in the choice of the places where he will poke them in, and in the knowledge of the depth to which they may penetrate, and the direction they ought to follow. In some cases the needles are made red hot. Very wonderful cures are said to have been performed by this method, but one

must really be born in Japan or China to submit to have one's body made into a pincushion.

Acupuncture has been, at different periods, much the fashion in Europe. This is what M. Abel Remusat wrote on the subject in 1825 :—“ Acupuncture has from the remotest antiquity formed one of the principal curative methods of Chinese and Japanese medicine; it has also been practised in Europe for several years, and for these few months much extolled in France. Like everything new and singular, this mode of proceeding has found both detractors and enthusiastic admirers. Some have seen in it a sort of panacea of marvellous efficacy; others an unmeaning operation, that might sometimes be highly dangerous. Facts have been cited on both sides; and as the opportunities for observation of it in Europe could not be very frequent or numerous, reference has been made to the experience of Asiatics, usually so much disdained in matters of science. Independently of academical essays, and articles in periodicals, some small works have been printed, capable of throwing light on this interesting point of therapeutics and physiology.”

Several celebrated physicians and natural philosophers — among others, MM. Morand, J. Cloquet, and Pouillet — made at that time repeated experiments in acupuncture. In studying the manner in which the needles act on a living body, they had been induced to think that the cause of pain was the accumulation of the electric fluid in the part that is the seat of it, and that the introduction of the needle might favour its discharge. The needle, in this hypothesis, was a reel lightning conductor introduced into the body of the patient; and the immediate, indeed instantaneous, relief

he felt, led naturally to the comparison of this physiological action with the phenomena that take place when a surface, charged with electricity, is put in relation with other bodies by means of a metallic conductor. It was even thought that on touching the needle about ten minutes after its introduction a slight shock was felt, like that produced by a very feeble voltaic pile. Thus an attempt was made to explain, at the same time, the cause of the affection as consisting in an accumulation of the electric fluid on a nervous branch, and the curative effect produced by the simple subtraction of the fluid. It had been subsequently ascertained from the experiments of M. Pouillet, that electric action did really take place on the introduction of a needle into a muscle affected with rheumatism; but that this action was not due to the pain, or the cause of the pain, since it took place equally when acupuncture was practised on a part that was not the seat of any neuralgic affection. It had been stated that this action took place in the same manner with animals, and that it constantly co-existed with the oxidation of the metal. It was demonstrated, that it was never excited by a needle of platina, gold, or silver, but only by those made of oxidable metals. It is therefore allowable to conclude that the physical phenomenon observed is the result of chemical action between the metal of the needle and the parts with which it is brought into contact; for there is never any oxidation of metal without a developement of electricity, and it is nearly certain that this current is of no effect in the relief felt by the sufferer.

As to the physiological effects of acupuncture, independently of the relief afforded, which has been re-

marked, especially in cases of rheumatism or neuralgia, they have mostly been observed to be the following. The introduction of the needle is not very painful, if care is previously taken to distend the skin, and if the needle is turned, instead of being driven straightforward. In general, its extraction is more painful than its introduction; there issues very little blood from the puncture; at most, only a few drops. The skin rises round the instrument, preserving its natural colour; but it soon sinks again, and there is formed a red circle round it. The sick person then feels shootings directed towards the part; muscular contractions take place; numbness, following the course of the great trunks of the nerves; and feverish shiverings. It is not uncommon to see a sweat break out over the part corresponding with the seat of pain; and in that case it has ceased, or at all events become diminished, or has shifted its place. Towards this time there have come faintings, more or less complete, and more or less durable, and which can scarcely be attributed to the pain of the puncture, since they have taken place when the painful sensation has ceased. This, it appears, is the only accident ever known to result from acupuncture. There might be, perhaps, cause to fear serious wounds and fatal consequences if the needle should traverse the great nervous trunks, or the organs essential to life. Some surgeons have asserted that the extreme fineness of the needle was a sufficient guarantee against consequences of this kind; but although in experiments made on animals, it has been found possible to pierce with them the stomach, the lungs, and even the heart, without any bad result, it is, nevertheless, certain that such attempts might occasion an irreparable misfortune.

The Chinese and Japanese doctors, being ignorant of anatomy, and having only the most vague and erroneous ideas on the subject of the organisation of the human frame, must often meet with fatal accidents; but acupuncture is not practised among them without rule and method, nor entirely according to the caprice of the practitioners.

They have determined on the surface of the human body three hundred and sixty-seven points to which they have given particular names, according to the relation in which they suppose them to stand with the internal parts; and in order to obtain practice without compromising human health, they have fabricated small copper figures, on which very small holes are made in the proper places; the surface of the figure is then covered with paper pasted on, and the student is required to place his needle without hesitation upon the spot where the opening is made, and on which he would be required to operate according to the affection he is examined upon.

“But what can all these precautions avail,” says M. Abel Remusat, in speaking of a Japanese book on Acupuncture, “in the profound ignorance of the practitioner as to the situation and connexion of the various organs? They regulate their practice solely on the principles of a blind routine, or the still more absurd theories of a fantastic physiology, which may be traced both in the general and particular precepts that the Japanese author has here collected. They set out on the principle that the arteries always proceed from above to below, the veins always from below to above. It is, therefore, prescribed, in performing the operation, to turn the point of the needle upward when it is

wished to go counter to the course of the blood, and downwards if you desire to proceed with it. An unseasonable or awkward puncture is to be corrected by making punctures on other corresponding points; and half the prescriptions in the book are worthy of the sagacity of this. In a syncope following a severe fall, the upper part of the throat, opposite the larynx, is to be punctured to a depth of eight lines. In pains in the loins, the hams are to be punctured; in dry coughs, the external and hinder part of the arm, to a depth of one line, or in the middle of the front of the arm, or at the base of the little finger. In considering how distant these parts are one from another, it has been supposed that the Japanese physicians sought to act by derivation; but that, in my opinion, is to do them too much honour, by attributing to them so clear an idea of revulsion. In this instance, as in so many others, they are probably only acting at random, on the suggestions of an ignorant and credulous empiricism.

“I will not take upon me, nevertheless, to pronounce a decided judgment upon Japanese medical doctrines, from a small unauthorised work, whose contents, perhaps, would not receive the approval of their really skilful medical men, if any such are to be found in Japan. There are works on medicine and surgery among us which would not give a very favourable idea of our progress in these sciences, if they should be taken up at random from our libraries and sent off to China as a specimen. In the King’s Library in Paris there is a little treatise on Acupuncture in Chinese, and the rules found in it do not agree with those of the Japanese. What may be said in praise of the physicians of both countries is, that in the application both of the needle

and the *moxa*, they seem to have been guided by long practice, and that the points assigned for the operation are not always as ill chosen as those above mentioned. They seem also to have been enlightened by experience as to the danger of introducing the needles above the principal nerves of the great arterial trunks and the vital organs; but it is probable that their experience on these points has cost the lives of a great number of patients."

We entertained precisely the same opinion on this matter as M. Abel Remusat, at the moment when it was proposed to stick needles into our own body; the operations of this kind that we had witnessed by no means tended to re-assure us sufficiently, although they had been what is called successful; and we felt no desire to contribute at our own expense to the progress of the art of acupuncture in the Chinese Empire. The doctor comprehended immediately the figurative language by which we had expressed our aversion to the introduction of the needles; and he did not insist on it, as Master Ting, with extreme sagacity, suggested that, as Europeans were not organised at all in the same manner as the Chinese, he might run the risk of sticking them in the wrong place. "What rashness!" he cried; "do we know how these Europeans are made? Who can tell what they have in their bodies? How do you know, doctor, what you would be sticking your needle into?" The doctor admitted, or feigned to admit, the cogency of Master Ting's reasoning; and it was settled that we should go back to our black broth, with certain modifications.

The night was a good deal better than the day had been; and in the morning the physician reappeared,

and found us, he said, extremely well prepared to take a most decisive remedy, the good effect of which was certain. The cure would be immediate and radical, and assuredly we could not require more. The preparation of this miraculous medicine required very little time or trouble; the doctor having asked for half a cup of tea, threw into it a dozen of minute red pills, scarcely the size of a pin's head, real homœopathic globules. As soon as we had swallowed this tea, which, by the addition of these globules had acquired a strong odour of musk, every body was ordered out of the room, that we might be left in perfect quiet; and though we certainly cannot affirm that this mode of treatment contributed to our relief or our cure, it is certain that we soon afterwards felt much better, and that the improvement went on during all the rest of the day.

In the evening we took six more red globules, and the next day we were decidedly convalescent, though still excessively weak; the malady had disappeared, there were no more convulsions, or headaches, or pains in the stomach;—and who so proud as our doctor? He harangued the company with the most perfect confidence on all imaginable subjects, and they vied with each other in applauding every word that came out of his mouth. Especially he did not fail to dwell on the infallible efficacy of this red medicine, when administered in due season, and according to the rules of prudence and wisdom,—two virtues which heaven had been pleased to confer upon him in the most supreme degree.

These red pills, to which every one attributed our cure, were not for us an unknown medicine, for they enjoy a prodigious celebrity in China, and we had heard them everywhere extolled. The pompous and emphatic

name that they bear is equal to their reputation. They are called *ling-pao-you-y-tan*, that is to say, "Supernatural treasure for all desires." It is said to be a true universal panacea, curing all kinds of maladies without any exception: the great difficulty consists in varying the dose, and combining it with a suitable liquid. Administered in an improper manner, this remedy may, it is said, become dangerous, and cause terrible infirmities. The composition of it is a secret, in possession of a single family in Peking, in which it has been faithfully transmitted from generation to generation; it is, therefore, impossible to mention the ingredients; its smell of musk, though very powerful, need not be considered as any thing characteristic, since in China, not only the medicines, but also every other object, the people, the land, the air, all are more or less impregnated with this particular odour. The whole Chinese Empire smells of musk, and the merchandise imported thence to Europe retains the smell for a long time.

This supernatural treasure, although manufactured only by the one family in Peking, is known all over the Empire, and can usually be bought at a moderate price; but it is necessary to be careful to get it unadulterated, which in China is no very easy thing. At Peking the price has never varied: it is the same as that of pure silver. One day we ourselves went to buy some in one of the principal shops, and we had only to place in one scale a small ingot of silver, and the merchant put in the other an equal weight of red pills.

The supernatural treasure is perhaps the most active sudorific existing; but it acts in a quite peculiar manner. A single one of these little red globules reduced to powder, and put up the nose like snuff, occasions a long

succession of sneezing, until the whole body breaks out into violent perspiration. This powder is sometimes used to ascertain if a sick person is near the point of death. If a pinch cannot make him sneeze, the Chinese say he will certainly die in a day; if he sneezes once, he will at all events not die till the morrow, and the hope increases in the precise ratio of the number of sneezings.

Chinese medicine is remarkable for the extreme whimsicality of its modes of procedure, and the collection of books in which it may be studied is very considerable; but they contain for the most part few recipes but such as are already more or less known. Europeans would of course find in them nothing interesting in a scientific point of view; but it would be a mistake to treat them with perfect contempt. The Chinese are endowed with prodigious powers of observation; they have much penetration and sagacity, and often notice many small, but not unimportant circumstances, to which minds superior to theirs might be apt to pay no attention. The antiquity of their civilisation, too, and their habit of collecting and preserving in writing the most important discoveries, must have put them in possession of an immense mass of useful facts.

We have never had the honour to study medicine ourselves; but we have often heard it maintained by learned and skilful physicians, that the art of curing human maladies was less a matter of science than of experience and observation. Sickness and infirmity is the mournful inheritance of humanity in all countries, and at all epochs; is it not reasonable to suppose that God has always placed it within the power of man to discover the means of relieving his sufferings, and pre-

serving his health. The most uncivilised nations, savages even, have often been found in possession of certain remedies, which science not only could never have invented, but of which it could not even explain the effects.

There are in China at least as many maladies as there are elsewhere ; yet mortality is not proportionably greater than in other countries. Its immense and exuberant population may be considered to afford a proof that, on the whole, Chinese doctors are not in practice much more awkward and unskilful than their brethren in Europe. Neither the one nor the other has yet been able to compound a good elixir of immortality, although both had the weakness to labour to discover such a one for many centuries : the Chinese find means, however, to live as long as we do, and octogenarians are as numerous among them as among us. We are, indeed, far from envying the Chinese their system of medicine, which it must be owned borders closely on quackery ; we would only assert the probability of their possessing curative methods proportioned to their necessities. We have even seen instances of their treating, with great success, diseases that would be considered very formidable by our medical faculty. There is no missionary who in his apostolic career may not have witnessed facts of this kind, capable of exciting his surprise and admiration. When a physician has succeeded in curing promptly and radically a malady presenting the most grave and dangerous symptoms, it is to little purpose to pass a learned condemnation on the methods he has employed, and endeavour to prove their inefficiency. The sick man has been healed—he is again in the enjoyment of perfect health—that is the essential point. There are

few people who would not prefer being saved in the most irregular and stupid manner to being killed according to the most approved and scientific methods.

It is indisputable, for instance, that there exist in China medical men who know how to treat the most decided cases of hydrophobia; and it matters little that during their treatment of this frightful malady, they expressly forbid any object containing hemp to be shown to the patient, under the idea that that would neutralise the effect of the remedies.

For several years we had for one of our catechists a man who had the precious gift of being able to set fractured limbs. We have seen him operate upon and cure with extraordinary facility more than fifty unfortunate men, whose bones were broken and even crushed. The operation always succeeded so well that the patients used to come themselves to thank him, to the chamber that he occupied beside ours, and in the presence of such results, we never felt inclined to laugh, because the plaster he employed to promote the junction of the bones was made of wood lice, white pepper, and a fowl pounded to death.

In 1840, we had in our seminary at Macao a young Chinese, who was about to be sent back to his family, on account of the complete deafness by which he had been for some months affected, and which did not permit him to continue his studies. Several medical authorities, Chinese, Portuguese, English, and French had been consulted in vain concerning this infirmity. The doctors explained in technical language the mechanism of hearing; they said wonderful things about it that did honour to the profundity of their knowledge; but their treat-

ment remained ineffectual, and the deafness was declared incurable.

Fortunately we had in our house a Christian recently arrived from our mission in the neighbourhood of Peking. He was neither a doctor nor a man of learning; nor did he possess any literary degree. He was simply a very poor peasant; but he recollected having noticed that the people of his country employed a certain plant with success in the cure of deafness. After diligent searching in the environs of Macao, he had the good fortune to find some of this salutary herb, and he expressed the juice of some of the leaves into the ears of the sick man, from which an immense quantity of humour was immediately discharged, and in two days the cure was complete. The young Chinese was enabled to continue his studies, and is at present a missionary in one of the southern provinces.*

The Chinese have some maladies peculiar to themselves, and not known elsewhere; as there exist several which make great ravages in Europe, and are in China unknown. Some are common to both the east and the west, and the method of curing them is no better understood in the one quarter of the world than the other. Phthisis, for example, is considered incurable by the Chinese physicians, and also the cholera. This terrible malady manifested itself first in China, then spread to the other countries of Asia, and afterwards reached Europe. It was under the following circumstances this formidable scourge, formerly unknown, made its first appearance. We have the account from a great number

* We could mention on the subject of Chinese medicine a number of remarkable facts; but we abstain, because *Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable*.

of the inhabitants of the province of *Chan-tong*, who were eye-witnesses of what they related.

In the first year of the reign of the deceased Emperor — that is to say in the year 1820, — a mass of reddish vapour was noticed one day upon the surface of the Yellow Sea. This singular phenomenon was observed by the Chinese of the province of Chan-Tong, which forms its coast. These vapours were at first light, but gradually increased, became condensed, rose little by little above the surface of the water, and at last formed an immense red cloud, which remained for several hours floating in the air. The Chinese were seized with terror, as they mostly are in the presence of all great natural phenomena, and sought in certain superstitious practices of the Bonzes the means of averting the threatened calamity.

They burned vast quantities of magic paper, which they threw all flaming into the sea. They formed long processions in which they bore the image of the Great Dragon; for they of course attributed these sinister omens to the anger of that fabulous personage. At last they had recourse to an extreme measure only adopted in desperate cases: they executed a tremendous charivari all along the sea coast. Men, women, and children went striking redoubled blows upon all the instruments most capable of producing a loud and sonorous noise, tam-tams, kitchen utensils, and metal implements of all kinds; and the wild and savage outcries of a countless multitude of people increased the horror of this infernal uproar. We were ourselves once witnesses of a similar manifestation in one of the great towns of the south, where all the inhabitants without exception, shut up in their houses, struck as in frenzy every metallic article

within reach, uttering at the same time the most frantic and incredible vociferations. One can hardly imagine anything more frightful than this monstrous tumult arising in the bosom of a great city. Whilst the inhabitants of Chan-tong were seeking to conjure away this unknown misfortune, which yet every one foresaw, a violent wind suddenly began to blow, and, dividing the cloud into various columns, drove them on toward the land. These red vapours spread in a winding course along the hills and valleys, and swept over the towns and villages, and wherever they passed men found themselves suddenly attacked by a frightful disease, which in a moment deranged the entire organisation, and changed a living man into a hideous corpse. In vain did the doctors anxiously turn over their books; nowhere could they find any hint of this new, strange, and terrible enemy, that struck like a thunderbolt, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other,—on poor and rich, young and old, but always apparently in the most capricious manner without following any fixed rule in the midst of its fearful ravages. Numberless remedies were tried, numberless experiments made; but entirely without success, and the implacable scourge went raging on with unabated fury, plunging whole populations into terror and mourning.

According to all that the Chinese have told us of this terrible malady it was incontestably the cholera. It ravaged first the province of Chan-tong, then turned northwards to Peking, striking always in its march the most populous towns. At Peking its victims were proportionally more numerous than elsewhere. Thence the cholera crossed the Great Wall, and the Chinese say that it faded away in the Land of Grass.

It is probable that it followed the route of the caravans as far as the Russian station of Khiaktha, and that, afterwards passing through Siberia, it invaded Russia and Poland, whence it made a bound to France after the revolution of 1830, just ten years after it had issued from the bosom of the Yellow Sea.

In China every one is at full liberty to take up the profession of medicine whenever he pleases ; the government does not in any way interfere with him. It is of opinion that the deep and lively interest every one takes in his own health is a sufficient guarantee that confidence will not be given to a doctor who is unworthy of it. Thus, whoever has read a few receipt books, and learned the nomenclature of medicaments, may plunge boldly into the noble art of healing his fellow-creatures, or killing them.

Medicine, as well as education, is found to be an excellent conduit to carry off the numerous literary bachelors, who are never likely to rise to the superior degrees, and attain the honours of the Mandarinate. Thus China is swarming with doctors, and, without reckoning the amateurs, who are almost innumerable—since, as we have said, every Chinese knows more or less of medicine, — there is no village so small as not to contain several professors of the healing art. Their position is indeed far less desirable than in Europe, for, besides that there is no great honour in exercising a profession that is within the reach of every one, there is also very little to be gained by it. Visits are not usually paid for at all: medicines are sold cheap, and always on credit; whence it may reasonably be inferred that the doctor cannot count on more than a third of his nominal revenue. It is also very much the custom not to pay for medicines

that have not produced a good effect, which happens pretty often, and even this is not the worst of the poor doctor's case. He is not unfrequently obliged to hide himself or fly the country, to avoid imprisonment, fines, the bamboo, or even worse punishment. This may happen when, having promised to cure a patient, he has been so awkward as to allow him to die. The relations then, without hesitation, commence a lawsuit against him, and the safest way, if the doctor have any regard for his life or his sapecks, is to take flight. It would seem that the legislature favours these severe proceedings; for the following passage occurs in the penal code of China, section 297.:—"When those who shall exercise the professions of medicine or surgery, without understanding them, and shall administer drugs or operate with a piercing or cutting instrument, in a manner contrary to established rules and practice, and that they shall thereby contribute to cause the death of the patient, the magistrate shall convoke other men of the profession to examine the nature of the remedy that they shall have administered, or the wound they shall have made, and which has been followed by the death of the patient. If it should appear that the physician or surgeon has only acted in error, and without any injurious intention, he may, by a certain payment, obtain remission of the punishment inflicted on a homicide, in the manner established for cases of killing by accident; but the physician or surgeon shall be compelled for ever to quit the profession." This last provision appears to us very sagacious, and such as might be imitated with advantage in other places.

Chinese doctors are very fond of a speciality, and occupy themselves exclusively with the treatment of

certain maladies. Some devote themselves to such as proceed from cold, others to those caused by heat. Some practise acupuncture; others devote their time to broken limbs. There are also doctors for infants, doctors for women, and doctors for old men. There are some who are called "suckers of blood," and who are, in fact, living cupping-glasses. They fasten their lips hermetically on the humours and abscesses of invalids, and, by drawing in their breath, make a vacuum, and cause the blood and humours to gush into their mouths. We have seen these vampires at work, and never witnessed a more revolting spectacle. The cure of the eyes, the ears, and the feet is usually left to the barbers, who enjoy also the privilege in some of the southern provinces of fishing for frogs. Whatever may be the speciality of the Chinese doctors, however, they very rarely become rich by the exercise of their art: they live from day to day as they best can, and commonly rival their brethren the schoolmasters in privation and poverty.

From what we have said, the reader will have formed no very favourable idea of Chinese medicine. It was our business to relate frankly and freely what we knew; but we would not excite any needless prejudice against it; for it is very possible that to it, after God, we are indebted for our lives.

As soon as our cure was complete, the civil and military Mandarins of *Kuen-kiang-hien* hastened to pay us a visit in grand state, and congratulate us on the favours that heaven and earth had just granted to us. They expressed to us in the most lively manner how happy they were to see us out of danger, and on the point of recovering possession of our precious and

brilliant health. This time we were persuaded that the words of the Mandarins were entirely sincere, and the true expression of their feelings, for our recovery released them from a terrible responsibility. They could not but be excessively uneasy while we were threatening to die under their jurisdiction; not, of course, that they cared whether we lived or died; but they could not doubt that our death would have occasioned them great embarrassment.

There are some special difficulties connected with the presence of a dead body in China. When an individual dies in his family there is no trouble; the relations are answerable, and no one has any right to raise doubts or suspicions concerning the causes of death. But if he lose his life out of doors, the proprietor of the place on which the body is found becomes responsible. Whether it be in a wood, in the middle of a field, on a piece of waste land, matters not, the owner of the soil is bound to give notice and afford the necessary explanations, which, to be considered valid, must be accepted by the relations of the deceased. In that case they undertake to perform the funeral; and when once they have presided over the burial all is over. But until then the unfortunate proprietor of the land remains responsible for the life of a man, whom perhaps he has never seen nor heard of. In these circumstances terrible things sometimes happen; incredible suits are commenced in which the Mandarins and the relations of the dead resort to every device of trickery and wickedness to satiate their cupidity, and ruin their victim. They have been known to keep an unfortunate and perfectly innocent man shut up in a dungeon, with the terrors

of death suspended over his head, until they have succeeded in despoiling him of all his goods.

This terrible law of responsibility, although often in practice a source of monstrous iniquities, was doubtless considered in the mind of the legislator in the light of a safeguard of human life, a salutary barrier to the outbreaks of passion. It may be conceived that in a country like China, where there exists no religious principle capable of restraining evil instincts, assassinations would take place every moment, if the blood of a man were made of small account. Draconian laws have been found necessary to restrain within the limits of duty these materialist populations living without a God, without religion, and consequently without a conscience. In order to teach them to respect the lives of their fellow creatures, a dead body has been made to them an object of excessive dread.

We cannot say whether this law has produced any of the good results hoped for from it; but it is easy to see the crying abuses to which it has given rise. Without speaking of iniquitous law-suits — of the persecutions carried on by the Mandarins against innocent persons, it is certain that this law tends to stifle every sentiment of compassion towards the unfortunate. Who would have the courage to receive into his house any poor suffering wayfarer whose life might be in danger? Who would venture to bestow care upon a dying man, or even to allow him to die in peace in his field, or the ditch that bordered it? Such an act of mercy might chance to be rewarded by total ruin, or even by capital punishment. Thus the sick and unfortunate are driven from every dwelling; they are obliged to remain stretched on the high road, or to be dragged under certain sheds,

which, being the property of the government, do not compromise any one. One day we ourselves saw an honest tradesman endeavouring, with tears and supplications, to persuade a poor fellow who had fainted on the threshold of his shop to go and die somewhere else; and the unfortunate creature got up with the help of a passer by, and had the charity to go further off and yield his last breath in the middle of the street.

One of the greatest acts of vengeance that a Chinese can practise towards an enemy is to deposit by stealth a dead body upon his ground. He is certain by that means to entail on his foe a long series of miseries and calamities. When we were at our mission in the valley of the Black Waters, one of the little towns in the environs became the scene of a horrible crime of this nature. A vagabond went into the warehouse of a great commercial establishment, and, addressing himself directly to the principal, said, "Steward of the cash-box, I want money and I have none; I have come to beg you to lend me some; I know that your Company is rich."

The sinister looks and audacious tone of the fellow intimidated the merchant, and, not daring to turn him out, he offered him two ounces of silver, saying politely it was for a cup of tea. The beggar demanded, with the utmost effrontery, whether he thought a man like him would be satisfied with two ounces of silver. "It is not much," said the merchant, "but times are bad, business is not going on well, and every body is poor now-a-days."

"What, you are poor too, are you?" said the mendicant; "keep your two ounces of silver then; I'm not going to starve you," and he went out, casting on the merchant a look like that of a wild beast.

The next day he presented himself again in the street before the door, holding a child in his arms, and called out, "Steward of the cash! steward of the cash!"

The merchant recognised the man, and cried, laughing, "Ah, ha, you have thought better of it, and have come to fetch your two ounces of silver, have you?"

"No, I have not," said the ruffian; "on the contrary, I have come to make you a present. See, here is something to make your business get on better;" and with these words he plunged a knife into the heart of the child, flung it all bleeding into the warehouse, and then rushed away and hid himself in the labyrinth of streets. The child belonged to a family known to be at enmity with this one, and the consequence was the total ruin of the house; the principal partners of which long languished in the public prisons.

It is probable that a case so atrocious as this does not often happen; but there is no doubt that the law in question quite fails in its object, and, instead of preventing crime, tends to produce it.

The fears entertained by the Mandarins of Kuenkiang-hien on our account had certainly not been such as to make them dread any of these terrible outrages of the Chinese law; but they had imagined that the French government would concern itself about our death, and call their Emperor to account for it, and that there would consequently come a long series of inquiries, perplexities, and annoyances of every kind, that the malevolent might accuse them of negligence, and that they might have to suffer loss and damage in various ways. We took good care not to undeceive them, and to tell them that our government had something else to

do than to trouble itself about us; we thought it better to leave them in this salutary fear—salutary not only for us, be it observed, but for any missionaries who might have anything to do with their tribunals. These Mandarins did not know probably that the judicial assassination of several French missionaries had formed no obstacle to the exchange of the most touching assurances of esteem and affection between the two governments, and that neither our sickness nor our death would be likely to occasion them the smallest uneasiness.

After resting four days at Kuen-kiang-hien, our strength being sufficiently restored, we began to think of continuing our journey. When we announced this joyful news to the prefect of the town, although he made the most polite efforts to appear concerned, it was impossible for him to restrain the transports of his delight. His language under its influence became quite poetical and flowery. He wished us—nay, he promised us for every day of our journey till we should reach Macao—a smooth and fine road, calm weather, a sky of cloudless blue, cool and umbrageous places of repose, a favourable wind, and a propitious current on the river; in short, he forgot nothing that could render our journey happy and agreeable. What a piece of good fortune it was for him that we should have been at Kuen-kiang-hien when we arrived, and just at the time of our illness! We might have met with a careless selfish magistrate, who would not have understood, or not have fulfilled his duty towards us; a magistrate who would not, as he had done, have given us his whole heart, have surrounded us every day, as he had had the happiness of doing, with solicitude, and affection, and devotion. And, in order to convince us of the sincerity

of these charming expressions, he assured us that he had carried his care so far as to choose for us a magnificent coffin, at the first maker's in Kuen-kiang-lien.

Could there possibly be a more polite man? To have a coffin made quite ready for us in case we should want it—we could not fail to thank him with warmth for this most tender and delicate attention.

In no other country than China, perhaps, could men be heard exchanging compliments on the subject of a coffin. People are mostly shy of mentioning the lugubrious objects destined to contain the mortal remains of a relation or friend, and when death does enter the house, the coffin is got in in secrecy and silence, in order to spare the feelings of the mourning family. But it is quite otherwise in China; there a coffin is simply an article of the first necessity to the dead, and of luxury and fancy to the living. In the great towns you see them displayed in the shops, with all sorts of tasteful decorations, painted and varnished, and polished and trimmed up to attract the eyes of passengers and give them the fancy to buy themselves one. People in easy circumstances, who have money to spare for their pleasures, scarcely ever fail to provide themselves beforehand with a coffin to their own taste, and which they consider becoming; and, until the moment arrives for lying down in it, it is kept in the house, not as an article of immediate necessity, but as one that cannot fail to be consoling and pleasant to the eye in a nicely furnished apartment.

For well brought-up children it is a favourite method of expressing the fervour of their filial piety towards the authors of their being, a sweet and tender consolation for the heart of a son to be able to purchase a beau-

tiful coffin for an aged father or mother, and come in state to present the gift at the moment when they least expect such an agreeable surprise. If one is not sufficiently favoured by fortune to be able to afford the purchase of a coffin in advance, care is always taken that before "saluting the world," as the Chinese say, a sick person shall at least have the satisfaction of casting a glance at his last abode; and if he is surrounded by all affectionate relations, they never fail to buy him a coffin, and place it by the side of his bed.

In the country this is not always so easy; for coffins are not kept quite ready, and, besides, peasants have not such luxurious habits as townspeople. The only way then is to send for the carpenter of the place, who takes measure of the sick person, not forgetting to observe to him that it must be made a little longer than would seem necessary, because one always stretches out a little when one's dead. A bargain is then made concerning the length and the breadth, and especially the cost; wood is brought, and the workmen set about their task in the yard close to the chamber of the dying person, who is entertained with the music of the saw and the other tools, while death is at work within him, preparing him to occupy the snug abode when it is ready.

All this is done with the most perfect coolness, and without the slightest emotion, real or affected. We have ourselves witnessed such scenes more than once, and it has always been one of the things that most surprised us in the manners of this extraordinary country. A short time after our arrival at the mission in the north, we were walking one day in the country with a Chinese seminarist, who had the patience to reply to all our long and tedious questions about the men and things

of the Celestial Empire. Whilst we were keeping up the dialogue as well as we could, in a mixture of Latin and Chinese, using a word of one or the other as we found occasion, we saw coming towards us a rather numerous crowd, who advanced in an orderly manner along a narrow path. It might have been called a procession.

Our first impulse was to turn aside, and get into some safe corner behind a large hill; for, not having as yet much experience in the manners and customs of the Chinese, we had some hesitation in producing ourselves, for fear of being recognised and thrown into prison—possibly even condemned and strangled. Our seminarist, however, reassured us, and declared that we might continue our walk without any fear. The crowd had now come up with us, and we stood aside to let it pass. It was composed of a great number of villagers, who looked at us with smiling faces, and had the appearance of being uncommonly pleased. After them came a litter, on which was borne an empty coffin, and then another litter, upon which lay extended a dying man wrapped in blankets. His face was haggard and livid, and his expiring eyes were fixed upon the coffin that preceded him. When every one had passed, we hastened to ask the meaning of this strange procession. “It is some sick man,” said the seminarist, “who has been taken ill in a neighbouring village, and whom they are bringing home to his family. The Chinese do not like to die away from their own house.” “That is very natural; but what is the coffin for?” “For the sick man, who probably has not many days to live. They seem to have made everything ready for his funeral. I remarked by the

side of the coffin a piece of white linen that they mean to use for the mourning.”

These words threw us into the most profound astonishment, and we saw then that we had come into a new world—into the midst of a people whose ideas and feelings differed widely from those of Europeans. These men quietly setting about to prepare for the funeral of a still living friend and relation; this coffin placed purposely under the eyes of the dying man, doubtless with the purpose of doing what was agreeable to him; all this plunged us into a strange reverie, and the walk was continued in silence.

The astonishing calmness with which the Chinese see the approach of death does not fail when the last moment arrives. They expire with the most incomparable tranquillity, without any of the emotions, the agitations, the agonies that usually render the moment of death so terrific. Their life goes out gently like a lamp that has no more oil. The most certain sign by which you may know when they have not long to live, is when they no longer ask for their pipe. “The sick man does not smoke any more,” the Chinese Christians were accustomed to say, when they came to summon us to administer the last sacraments. This was a formula to indicate that the danger was pressing, and that there was no time lose.

It appears to us that this peaceable death of the Chinese is to be attributed, first, to their soft and lymphatic temperament, and, secondly, to their entire want of religious feeling. The apprehensions connected with a future life, and the bitterness of separation, cannot exist for those who have never loved any one much, and who have passed their lives without thinking of God or

their souls. They die indeed calmly; but irrational animals have the same advantage, and at bottom this death is really the most lamentable that can be imagined.

We quitted at last this town of Kuen-kiang-hien, where we had been on the point of stopping for ever; but before we set off we had the curiosity to go and see the coffin that had been prepared for us. It was made out of four enormous trunks of trees, well planed, stained of a violet colour, and beautifully varnished. Master Ting asked us how we liked it. "Superb," we said; "but yet we must own we prefer being seated in our palanquin."

We resumed our journey, conformably to the new programme, by torch and lantern light.

The doctor had recommended it when he gave us his parting advice; and the night travelling so completely restored our strength and appetite, that the next day, when we entered the Communal Palace of *Tien-men*, we felt quite fresh and well.

CHAP. II.

VISIT OF THE MANDARINS OF TIEN-MEN. — THEIR ATTENTION TO US. — FAME OF TIEN-MEN FOR THE NUMBER AND BEAUTY OF ITS WATER-MELONS. — EXTENSIVE USE OF THE WATER-MELON SEED. — CAUSTIC HUMOUR OF A YOUNG MILITARY MANDARIN. — THE INHABITANTS OF SSE-TCHOUEN TREATED AS STRANGERS IN THE PROVINCE OF HOU-PÉ. — PREJUDICES OF EUROPEANS WITH REGARD TO CHINESE. — THE MANNER IN WHICH MOST WORKS ON CHINA ARE COMPOSED. — TRUE VIEW OF THE SUPPOSED IMMOBILITY OF THE ORIENTALS. — REVOLUTIONS IN THE CHINESE EMPIRE. — SOCIALIST SCHOOL IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY. — ACCOUNT OF THEIR SYSTEM. — LONG AND SEVERE STRUGGLE. — TRANSPORTATION OF TARTAR AGITATORS. — CAUSES OF THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS.

THE mandarins of the town of Tien-men made haste to visit us. They knew that a serious illness had detained us four days at Kuen-kiang-hien, and though they had been informed that our health was improving, they desired to convince themselves of it in person. It was easy to see through this great politeness; they feared no doubt that being yet scarcely convalescent, we might take it into our heads to rest awhile in their town. What if a relapse should take place, and we should die at Tien-men! It may be imagined how formidable these ideas were to men who dread expense and trouble above everything. When they saw us, however, their fears were at an end, for we were looking pretty well, and, what mattered more to them, expressed our intention of pursuing our journey at nightfall. Full of hope, they exerted themselves to render our departure

easy and agreeable. In order to procure for us invigorating repose, they set a guardian of the Communal Palace to drive out with a horse-hair fly-flapper any mosquitoes that might be in our rooms; and, fearing that these impertinent insects, yielding to the depravity of their natures, might return to trouble our slumbers, they fumigated all the approaches with certain aromatic herbs whose odour is said to be unendurable to mosquitoes. The desired result was obtained; we slept tranquilly and to our hearts' content.

Hearing that we had more than once shown a predilection for aqueous fruits, the authorities of Tien-men had the kindness to put an abundant supply of them at our disposal; water-melons, in particular, were lavished on us with astonishing prodigality. The soldiers, the servants, the palanquin-bearers, all had as much as they could desire. It was the height of the season for this fruit, which is produced at Tien-men of unusual size and superior flavour. Though it was very early when we entered the town, we had remarked in all the streets long stalls covered with a profusion of magnificent slices of water-melons; some were scarlet, some white, and some yellow, the latter being generally the most delicate.

The water-melon is very important in China on account of its seeds, for which the Chinese have a perfect passion. The reader may perhaps remember the old Mandarin of honour, who had been fastened upon us in the capital of See-tchouen, and who seemed to have come into the world for no other purpose than to chew melon-seeds. In some places, when the harvest is abundant, the fruit is valueless, and only preserved for the sake of the seed. Sometimes the fruit is carried

in quantities to some frequented highway, and given away to travellers, on condition that they shall put aside the seeds for the proprietor. By this interested generosity they have the glory of refreshing the weary during the hot season, and they also relieve themselves of the trouble of working these mines to extract the precious deposit within.

These water-melon seeds are indeed a treasure of cheap amusement for the three hundred million inhabitants of the Celestial Empire. They are an object of daily consumption throughout the eighteen provinces, and it is amusing to see these extraordinary people munching these seeds before their meals to test the condition of their stomach and appetite. Their long and pointed nails are then extremely useful. The skill and rapidity with which they strip off the hard shell to obtain the tiny kernel must be seen to be appreciated; a troop of squirrels or apes could not manœuvre more dexterously. We always thought that the natural propensity of the Chinese for what is artificial and deceptive had inspired them with this frantic passion for water-melon seeds; for if there is in the world a disappointing dish, a fantastic kind of food, it is surely this. Therefore the Chinese use them at all times and in all places. If a few friends assemble to drink tea or rice-wine, there is always an obligato accompaniment of melon-seeds. They are eaten whilst travelling, whilst pursuing business; when children or workmen have a few sapecks to dispose of, they run to expend them on this dainty; it is sold everywhere—in the towns and the villages, on the high-roads and the by-roads; in the wildest and most ill-provisioned district you need never fear to be without melon-seeds. The consumption of them

throughout the Empire is something incredible, something beyond the limits of the wildest imagination. You sometimes see junks on the rivers entirely loaded with this precious cargo; truly you might imagine yourself in a nation of *rodentia*. It would be a curious inquiry, and one worthy to attract the attention of our great compilers of statistical tables, to fix the daily, monthly, or yearly consumption of this article, in a country counting three hundred million inhabitants.

On leaving Tien-men, where we passed a pleasant day, there was appointed to accompany us as escort to the following stage, a young military Mandarin, whose manners and gossip amused us much. His little, pale, lively face, with a touch of sarcasm in it, excited interest and curiosity; although a soldier, he had more brains than most of the men of letters, and no one was more convinced of this than himself. As he spoke not only with ease but with elegance, he was not backward in the use of his tongue; he discussed everything that came into his head with decision and authority, interlarding his long harangues with pleasantries and witticisms not wanting in smartness. Above all, he boasted of a long residence at Canton, and of some small displays of prowess against the English, as well as of having studied the manners and customs of foreign nations, and of being thus fitted to appreciate and judge definitively every subject on the face of the earth.

When we halted for our mid-day meal, he began to tease the Mandarins of our escort most pitilessly. He talked of Sse-tchouen as of a foreign country, a mere savage region. He asked them whether civilisation had begun to creep into the mountains yet. "You are not from the Thibet frontier," said he; "it is easy to perceive in your

accent, manners, and appearance, that you live very near a race of savages, and this is certainly the first time you have travelled. Everything surprises you—that is always the way with people who never stir from the place they are born in;” and he went on to point out to them many contrasts between their customs and those of Hou-pé.

To tell the truth, our Sse-tchouenites had found themselves sadly out of their element since they had left their province. They were ignorant of the manners of the country we were traversing; they were laughed at, insulted, and, above all, fleeced.

One day, for example, some soldiers of the escort had seated themselves for a few minutes before a shop. When they rose to depart, a clerk of the establishment came and demanded, with much gravity, two sapecks a piece for having rested before his door. The soldiers looked at him in amazement; but the malicious clerk held out his hand with the air of a man who has no suspicion that his demand can possibly be objected to. The poor travellers, attacked in their tenderest point—the pocket—ventured to say that they did not understand the demand. “That is very strange!” cried the clerk; and, summoning his neighbours around, “Look here! these men fancy they can sit before my shop for nothing! Where can they come from, I wonder, to be ignorant of the commonest customs!”

The neighbours exclaimed, laughed loudly, and marvelled at people who were simple enough to imagine they could sit down for nothing. The soldiers, ashamed of being taken for uncivilised creatures, paid the two sapecks, saying, to excuse themselves, that such was not the custom in Sse-tchouen. They had not gone far

however when some officious shop-keepers ran to tell them, as a consolation, that they were very silly to let themselves be taken in so easily.

These scenes were of daily occurrence while we were travelling through Hou-pé, and indeed we natives of the West found ourselves more at home throughout China than the inhabitants of other provinces who were unused to travelling.

Very false ideas are entertained in Europe concerning China and the Chinese. It is spoken of as an empire of remarkable and imposing unity, as a perfectly homogeneous nation, so that to know one Chinese is to know them all; and after passing some time in a Chinese town, you are capable of describing life throughout this vast country. This is far from being the case, though no doubt there are certain characteristics to be found throughout, which constitute the Chinese type.

These characteristics are remarkable in the face, the language, the manners, the ideas, and certain national prejudices; but they are distinguished by such varieties of shade, such well defined differences, that it is easy to tell whether you are dealing with the men of the north, south, east, or west. In passing from one province to another, you become aware of these modifications; the language changes by degrees till it is no longer intelligible; the dress alters in form so much that you can distinguish a citizen of Canton from one of Peking by it alone. Each province has customs peculiarly its own, even in important matters, in the imposition of taxes, the nature of contracts, and the construction of houses. There exist also particular privileges and laws which the government dare not abolish, and which the functionaries are forced to respect; there reign everywhere

rights of established custom which destroy that civil and administrative unity that Europeans have been pleased to attribute to this colossal empire.

As much difference might be pointed out between the eighteen provinces as between the various states of Europe; a Chinese who passes from one to the other finds himself in a strange country, amidst a people whose habits are unknown to him, where every one is struck with the peculiarity of his face, language, and manners. There is nothing surprising in this when it is considered that the Chinese empire is composed of a number of kingdoms, often separated under the dominion of various princes, and ruled by distinct legislation. These nations, though more than once united, have never combined so closely but that an observing eye could detect the different elements composing the vast whole.

Hence it follows that a sojourn in Macao or the factories of Canton does not render a man competent to judge of the Chinese nation. Even a missionary, who has resided many years in the bosom of a Christian community, will no doubt be perfectly acquainted with the district that has been the theatre of his zealous labours; but if he undertakes to extend his observations, and believes that the ways of the converts around him are those of the whole empire, he deceives himself, and misleads the public opinion of Europe. It may be imagined, therefore, how difficult it is to form a just estimate of the Chinese character and country from the writings of travellers who have paid a passing visit to those ports open to Europeans. These writers are undoubtedly gifted with intellect and a fertile imagination; they choose their language, and turn their sentences

with an enviable skill; when reading their books you never doubt their good faith for a moment; there is only one thing wanting,—that they should have seen the country and the nation of which they speak.

Let us suppose that a citizen of the Celestial Empire, wishing to become acquainted with that mysterious Europe whose products he has so often admired, makes up his mind to visit the extraordinary people of whom he has no knowledge beyond a vague notion of their geographical position. He embarks; and, after traversing the ocean till he is sick of seeing nothing but sea and sky, he reaches the port of Havre. Unfortunately he does not know a word of French, and is obliged to call to his assistance some porter who has picked up, somehow or other, a little Chinese; he adorns him with the title of interpreter or *toun-sse*, and gets on with him as best he can, eking out his words with abundance of pantomimic gestures.

Furnished with this guide, he traverses the streets of Havre from morning till night, disposed to make an astonishing discovery at every step, in order that he may have the pleasure of regaling his fellow countrymen with his wonderful adventures on his return home. He enters every shop, is enraptured with all he sees, and buys the most extraordinary things, paying, of course, two or three times what they are worth, because there is an understanding between his interpreter and the shopman to get as much as possible out of the barbarian.

Of course our Chinese is a philosopher and a moralist, and therefore takes a great many notes; he devotes the evening to this important labour, to which he calls in the aid of his guide. He always has a long series of ques-

tions ready for him, but is a little embarrassed because he can neither make his own questions quite intelligible, nor understand very clearly the answers returned. Nevertheless, after making the effort of coming to the West, it is absolutely necessary to acquire a mass of information, and enlighten China on the condition of Europe. What would people say if he had nothing to tell them after his long journey? He writes, therefore, sometimes according to the information of a porter whom he does not understand, sometimes at the dictation of his own suggestive imagination.

After a few months passed thus in Havre, our traveller returns to his native country, well disposed to yield to the entreaties of his friends not to deprive the public of the useful and precious information he has collected concerning an unknown country.

No doubt this Chinese will have seen many things he did not expect; and if he be at all well informed, might prepare a very interesting article on Havre for the Peking Gazette. But if, not content with that, he takes up his too ready pen to compose a dissertation on France, the form of its government, the character of its senate and legislature, its magistracy and army, science, arts, industry and commerce, not to speak of the various kingdoms of Europe, which he will liken to France, we must suspect that his narrative, however picturesque and well written, will contain a mass of errors. His "Travels in Europe," as he will no doubt call his book, cannot fail to convey to his countrymen very false ideas regarding the nations of the West.

Many works on China published in Europe have been written in the manner I have described, and after perusing them it is difficult to imagine China such as she really

is. The China described is a work of imagination, a country which has no existence, and setting aside the great mistake regarding the unity of the Chinese Empire, there are many others which we will venture to point out.

The immutability of the Asiatics is one of those established ideas in regard to them which is founded on an utter ignorance of their history. "If there is," says M. Abel Remusat, "in the whole range of European ideas, one recognised fact, one notion indisputably settled, it is that of the subjection of Eastern nations to their ancient doctrines, manners, and customs, of the regularity of their habits, and the unchangeable nature of their laws. The immutability of the East has passed into a proverb, and this opinion, among other advantages, possesses that of rendering superfluous all inquiry after their ancient condition, which is supposed to be illustrated so well by their present state. May I venture to brave the general conviction, and disturb the tranquillity of public opinion on this topic, by representing the Orientals as people who from time to time have followed new doctrines, adopted various forms of government, and bowed to the sway of fashion in the matter of personal adornments. The Europeans, who are so fond of change in these things, will think that in asserting this I intend to extol the Asiatics, and I fear being taken for an enthusiastic eulogist of these people, because I try to establish a conviction of their inconstancy.

"But, in the first place, what intimate connection is there between those nations called Orientals, that we should class them under one general head, and include them all in one comprehensive estimate? It would appear that somewhere or other there is an immense

country called the East, whose inhabitants, formed on the same model, and subject to the same influences, may be described *en masse*, and comprehended in one view. Yet what have these nations in common beyond their Asiatic birth? And what is Asia but a portion of the great continent which the sea only surrounds on three sides, and to which we have assigned fictitious limits, and traced an imaginary boundary on the side nearest us? Even those ancient names that were formerly in use are becoming superseded by more elegant appellations, and it is hard to say exactly what is Asia, since our geographers have proscribed the whole four quarters of the world, and substituted a division of three, five, or six with the harmonious names of Australia, Polynesia, Oceanica, and Nothasia.* Are the Malays an Asiatic race? Are the Muscovites a European nation? Are there many points of resemblance between an Armenian and a Tartar, an Indian and a Japanese? There is more difference between them than between a Londoner and a Parisian, a citizen of Madrid or of St. Petersburg. Yet we class them all together, because we do not know how to distinguish them, just as we are embarrassed to detect a difference of features in those negro faces which on casual observation appear identical. We confound intellectual traits and moral developments, and from this confusion produce an imaginary being, resembling nothing that really exists; we call it an Asiatic or Oriental, and, knowing no more about it, praise or blame at random; generic terms are indeed useful to people who are not particular about having correct ideas,

* A name sometimes applied by French geographers to a portion of the Indian archipelago, including the isles of Sunda, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, and Philipppines.—TRANS.

and who care little to understand before pronouncing judgment.

“ But if you would consider this subject more nearly, you will be surprised at the multitude of things unknown to you, at the prodigious differences to be traced between nations which we class together so carelessly, or, to speak more plainly, which we confound so ignorantly. I do not mean varieties of climate, nor of dress, which necessarily follow those variations, nor of race as exhibited in the countenance, although that is great enough to cause one people to treat as a monster what is elsewhere prodigiously admired. Nor do I point to natural productions, which influence social habits so largely, nor to language, though it acts powerfully on literary taste ; I confine myself especially to two points, religion and laws, two points of the highest importance, revolutions in which produce such great changes in public and private life, and which do not in Asia present the painful monotony that has been fancied ; for, in spite of what a great writer has said, these two points do not depend entirely on climate, or, in other words, religion and law are not settled by rain and sunshine.” *

After passing briefly in review the principal Asiatic nations, and showing that they have little or nothing in common, that each has a separate moral, political, and religious character, this learned and discerning writer continues thus : “ All these races may be called Easterns, for the sun certainly lights them before us ; or Asiatics, for they live east of the Oural mountains, which in modern maps are considered the line of demarcation between Europe and Asia, but it must be understood that the name is all they have in common, and that it

* *Melanges Asiatiques*, p. 224.

is used for brevity's sake to avoid long and useless denominations, being only incorrect when used carelessly and unthinkingly. The characteristics which are common to these nations are their obstinacy in what concerns themselves, and their prejudice against foreigners. But these blind prejudices and this dogged obstinacy separate them one from another as much as from us, and a Japanese at Teheran, or an Egyptian in the streets of Nankin, would be an object of almost as much astonishment and ridicule as a European.

“But in recalling the annals of the past, shall we perhaps discover something of that uniform civilisation, that one primitive type, whose chief attribute is held to be immutability? Different as they now are, may the Easterns only have become so in the course of time? Did they indeed resemble one another at a far distant epoch? Have they become changeable in consequence of change, and has one revolution given them a taste for others? The history of Asia answers all these questions, and if a false solution of them is offered to the public, the reason is that it costs some trouble to study the history itself, and that the greater part of those who speak of it find it easier to create fiction than to search for truth.

“Religion and government are among the things which should only be changed on necessity, and men who allow themselves to be lightly influenced on other subjects might adhere firmly to their opinion on these. But men are men in Asia as elsewhere, and inconstancy in serious matters has ever been a malady of the human race. We therefore find in the annals of that part of the world such abundant material for the history of folly and error, that we must be rich indeed in such experi-

ence on our own account to be able to neglect so many useful lessons, which would not cost us a tear or a penny.

“Asia is the domain of fable, of aimless reveries and fantastic imagery; what astonishing varieties, and, we may say, what deplorable diversity may be there observed of the manner in which human reason, without any other guide, has endeavoured to satisfy the first want of society—religion.

“If there are few truths that have not been taught in Asia, it may also be said that there are few extravagances that have not been held in honour there. The mere list of the various faiths that have in turn prevailed in the East saddens good sense and alarms the imagination. The idolatry of the Sabæans, the worship of fire and the elements, Islamism, the polytheism of the Brahmins, that of the Buddhists and followers of the Grand Lama, the worship of the heavenly bodies, and ancestors, of spirits and demons, and many minor sects of which little is known, all vying with each other in senseless dogmas and strange customs, do not these present variety enough on a most important point? And how can morals, laws, and customs be unchangeable, when the very basis of all law and morality vacillates thus?

“Nor is it a single nation in Asia that has been subject to these fluctuations; all the nations, all the races, have brought their contribution to swell the general mass of follies very like our own; and to see the eagerness with which they are adopted in nations which have not given them birth, one would say that, contrary to ordinary opinion, the desire for change among these men overcomes even the force of custom and national prejudice, in so much that a new system

is always welcome, if it be but in opposition to common sense; for reasonable ideas have less lively charms and less rapid success, they attract at first only intelligent minds, and it is often but slowly that they gain ground with the multitude."

The Chinese, with whom we ought here particularly to occupy ourselves, have not been the less remarkable among Asiatic races for their inconstancy in religion. In the ages of antiquity, China preserved herself from one evil by the aid of another; she avoided idolatry by lapsing into indifference; already during the lifetime of Confucius, however, China was divided by two principal religious sects, and five or six systems of philosophy, all teaching contradictory doctrines. A third faith, that of Buddhism, has since been added to the two first, and the three have held possession of an empire which counts one-third of the human race. Long and tragic are the accounts of the divisions and quarrels which, at various epochs of Chinese history, these religious questions have given rise to; but it is to be remarked that whilst the cultivated classes have been always attached to the principles of Confucius, the multitude have inclined to the superstitious practices of Buddhism. But it would be difficult to find, elsewhere than in China, people who could adopt all these various faiths and philosophic systems, without troubling themselves to reconcile them one with the other. This was the commencement of that relapse into religious indifference, in which the Chinese are now plunged, after so long suffering themselves to be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

Nor have governments and institutions varied less than religion throughout Asia. Here again is the fancied constancy wanting. Religion and politics are

everywhere connected, and as we retrace our steps to the infancy of society, they appear to be blended together. In the Eastern regions of Asia they were formerly one and the same thing, if we may judge from tradition; and the government of forty centuries ago did not in the least resemble those of the present day. The name of *heaven* was given to the Empire, the sovereign called himself *God*, and confided to his several ministers the business of lighting, warming, and fertilising the universe. The titles of these ministers, and the dresses they wore, corresponded to their noble functions; there was one to represent the sun, one for the moon, and so on for the other planets; there was a superintendent of mountains, another of rivers, of air, forests, &c. A supernatural authority was attributed, to these functionaries, and the harmony of this fine order of things was only disturbed by comets and eclipses, which were supposed to announce to the world a deviation of the heavenly bodies from their accustomed path, and whose apparition, even at the present day in China, is a rude shock to the popularity of a statesman. A very similar system appears to have reigned in Persia in remote antiquity, but in both countries terrestrial events rudely dissipated these brilliant fictions. War, rebellion, conquest, and division led to the establishment of the feudal system, which lasted about seven or eight centuries, nearly the period during which it held sway in Europe, and which was more than once reproduced by the effect of the same causes which first gave it birth. Monarchy, nevertheless, prevailed generally, and ended by obtaining a complete and decisive triumph; so that China really experienced what would have been seen in Europe, had

the dreams of those who aspired to universal empire been realised, and France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the States of the North been united in one vast kingdom, ruled by one sovereign, and having the same institutions.

The counterpoise to the Imperial power (at first a very weak one) was the philosophy of Confucius. It acquired more strength in the seventh century, became regularly organised, and it is now 1,200 years since the system of competition and examinations for literary degrees, the aim of which is to subject the unlearned to the yoke of the learned, has practically placed the government in the hands of educated men.

The irruptions of Tartars, a race who trouble themselves very little about literature, have sometimes suspended the rule of this philosophical oligarchy, but sooner or later it has always resumed its sway, for the Chinese appear to prefer the dominion of the pen to that of the sword, and pedantry to violence, though the one does not always banish the other. Those learned men who have made such erudite researches to prove how the Chinese government has been enabled to remain unchanged for 4,000 years, have neglected one thing which is rather important. No doubt the reasons alleged are very learned and well imagined, but the fact to be accounted for is simply not true, a misfortune which has happened before now to philosophical explanations. The Chinese have adopted various maxims, altered their form of government, tried divers political combinations, and, though there are some experiments of which they have not bethought themselves, their history presents nearly the same phases as that of most other nations.

China has certainly no need to envy other countries their changes; but she might excite jealousy in some on the score of her revolutions, the tragic overthrow of dynasties, and civil wars.

What would our most famous European revolutionists say, if they were told that they are but children and scholars beside the Chinese in the art of upsetting society? Yet this is true; their history is one series of catastrophes which have at various times shaken the empire to its foundation.

Compare France and China within a given period of time, say from the year 420—the entrance of the Franks into Gaul—to the year 1644, when Louis XIV. ascended the throne of France, and when the Mantchou Tartars established themselves in Pekin. During the time of 1224 years, these so-called peaceful Chinese, this nation so attached to ancient laws and customs, so renowned for its immobility, went through fifteen changes of dynasty, all accompanied by frightful civil wars, and almost all by the bloody extermination of the dethroned families. In the same space of time France only saw two changes of dynasty, which were quietly effected by time and circumstances, without any effusion of blood.

It is true that since then we have made great progress, and that since we have made acquaintance with the Chinese, we have done our best to emulate them. If we could imagine that the history of China was at all studied amongst us, we might fancy that our fellow-countrymen had resolved to copy them; they have done it already to admiration on several points; a feverish taste for political change, and a profound indifference on religious topics, are two leading traits of Chinese character. It is a curious fact that the greater

part of those social theories which have lately thrown the public mind of France into a ferment, and which are represented as the sublime results of the progress of human reason, are but exploded Chinese Utopias which agitated the Celestial Empire centuries ago. Our readers may judge of this from the extracts we shall make from the History of China, but which we must condense, on account of their lengthy details.

In the 11th century of our era, the Chinese nation, under the dynasty of Song, presented a spectacle nearly analogous to that seen in Europe, and France especially, of late years. The great and knotty questions of social and political economy filled all minds, and split into parties every class of society. Those people who at other times have seemed so indifferent to the proceedings of their government, then flung themselves passionately into the discussion of systems which aimed at an immense social revolution. Matters had come to such a point, that the ordinary business of life was neglected; commerce, handicrafts, and even agriculture, were abandoned for polemical agitation. The nation was divided into two furious parties; pamphlets, libels, inflammatory writings of all kinds were daily flung profusely to the multitude, who devoured them with avidity. Placards also played a prominent part, and though not long since we manifested a certain aptitude for this mode of influence, it must be confessed we are far behind the Chinese.

The reformer, or chief of the Socialist party, was the famous Wang-ngan-chó, a man of remarkable talent, who kept all classes of the Empire in excitement during the reign of several emperors. Chinese historians say that he had received from nature a mind far above medi-

ocrity, which was brought to perfection by careful culture. In youth he studied with ardour and application, and his efforts were crowned with success; he was distinguished by honourable mention among those who received the rank of doctor at the same time. He spoke with eloquence and grace, having the art of giving weight to all he said, and he knew how to give an air of importance to trifling things when his interest required it. His private life was regular, and all his external conduct respectable; such were his good qualities. On the other hand, he is represented as ambitious, and as a man who thought any means lawful to gain his ends, self-willed to obstinacy when he had to support an opinion he had once advanced; haughty, and filled with an idea of his own merits, esteeming only what agreed with his own opinions and views of politics, and desirous of uprooting and utterly destroying the old institutions of his country, to replace them with new ones of his own invention.

To accomplish his enterprise he did not hesitate to undertake a long, difficult, and even repulsive task. This was to make ample commentaries on all the sacred and classical writings, into which he insinuated his own opinions; and to compose a universal dictionary, in which he gave to certain words an arbitrary meaning according to his own interest. Historians add that he was incompetent to conduct affairs of state, because he had only general views on the subject, and would have governed according to maxims which, though good in themselves, he did not apply to the right time and circumstance.

The popularity of Wang-ngan-ché fluctuated greatly at various periods during the time that he bent all his

efforts to reorganise, or rather to revolutionise the Empire. His power was almost unlimited beneath the Emperor Chen-tsoung, who, charmed with the brilliant qualities of the reformer, gave him his entire confidence.

The executive and the tribunals were soon filled with his creatures, and seizing the favourable moment to realise his schemes, the ancient order of things was soon overthrown. His innovations and reforms were greeted enthusiastically by his partisans, and attacked with envenomed eagerness by his enemies.

The most formidable adversary encountered by Wang-ngan-ché was a statesman named Sse-ma-kouang, one of the most celebrated historians of China, the same who described his garden so charmingly in the little poem we have already quoted.

M. Abel Remusat has written a biographical notice of him, in which occurs the following account of Wang-ngan-ché and his opponents.*

“The Emperor Chen-tsoung, on ascending the throne, desired to surround himself with all the enlightened men of the country, amongst whom Sse-ma-kouang could not be overlooked. This new phase of his political life was no less stormy than the previous one. Placed in opposition to one of those audacious spirits who, in the path to their plans of reform, fear no obstacle, and respect no ancient institution, Sse-ma-kouang showed himself, what he had ever been, a religious observer of the customs of antiquity, and ready to brave all for their maintenance.

“Wang-ngan-ché was the reformer whom chance had

* *Nouveaux Melanges Asiatiques.*

opposed to Sse-ma-kouang, as if to summon to an equal combat the guardian genius that watches over the preservation of empires, and the spirit of reform that makes them tremble. Stimulated by contrary principles, the adversaries were gifted with equal talents: one employed the resources of his imagination, the activity of his mind, and the firmness of his character, to change and to regenerate; the other, to stem this torrent, called to his aid the remembrance of the past, the example of the ancients, and the lessons of history, which he had studied with care.

“Even the prejudices of the nation to which Wang-ngan-ché was proud to show himself superior, found a supporter in his antagonist. In the year 1069 several provinces had been visited in succession by a number of terrible disasters; epidemic maladies, earthquakes, and a drought which destroyed nearly all the harvest. According to custom, the censors seized the occasion to invite the Emperor to examine if there were faults in his conduct to amend, or abuses in his government to reform; and the Emperor testified his sorrow by abstaining from certain pleasures, music and fêtes in the palace. The reforming minister disapproved of this homage to old prejudice. ‘These calamities,’ said he to the Emperor, ‘have settled and unvarying causes; earthquakes, droughts and inundations have no connection with the actions of man. Do you hope to change the ordinary course of things, and that Nature should alter her laws for you?’”

Sse-ma-kouang, who was present, did not suffer this speech to pass uncombated. “Monarchs are indeed to be pitied,” cried he, “when they have near their persons men who propound such theories; they would de-

stroy the fear of heaven, and what other restraint can check their disorders? Masters of all around, they dare anything with impunity, and would give themselves up to any excess; and those subjects who are really attached to them would no longer be able to excite their better feelings."

According to Wang-ngan-ché, the carrying out of his scheme was to procure infallible happiness to the people in the development of the greatest possible material enjoyments for every one. Whilst reading the history of this famous epoch in the dynasty of Song, one is forcibly struck with the resemblance of the writings and harangues of Wang-ngan-ché to those which, in our own time, we have seen propounded in the newspapers and the senate.

"The first and most essential duty of a government," said the Chinese socialist, "is to love the people, and to procure them the real advantages of life, which are plenty and pleasure. To accomplish this object it would suffice to inspire every one with the unvarying principles of rectitude, but as all might not observe them, the State should explain the manner of following these precepts, and enforce obedience by wise and inflexible laws. In order to prevent the oppression of man by man, the State should take possession of all the resources of the Empire, and become the sole master and employer. The State should take the entire management of commerce, industry, and agriculture into its own hands, with the view of succouring the working classes and preventing their being ground to the dust by the rich." According to these new regulations, tribunals were to be established throughout the Empire, which were to fix the price of provisions and merchan-

dise. For a certain number of years taxes were to be imposed—to be paid by the rich — from which the poor should be exempt. The tribunals were to decide who was rich and who poor. The sum thus collected was to be reserved in the coffers of the State, to be distributed to aged paupers, to workmen out of employ, and to whoever should be judged to stand most in need of it.

According to Wan-ngan-ché the State was to become the only proprietor of the soil; in each district the tribunals were to assign the land annually to the farmers, and distribute amongst them the seed necessary to sow it, on condition that the loan was repaid either in grain or other provisions after the harvest was gathered; and in order that all the land should be profitably cultivated, the officers of the tribunals should fix what kind of crop was to be grown, and supply the seed for it.

“It is evident,” said the partisans of the new scheme, “that by these means abundance and happiness will reign throughout the land. The only people who can suffer by this state of things are the usurers and monopolists, who never fail to profit by famine and all public calamities, to enrich themselves and ruin the working classes. But what great harm will it be to put an end at last to the exactions of these enemies of the people? Does not justice require that they should be forced to restitute their ill-gotten gains? The State will be the only creditor, and will never take interest. As she will watch over agriculture and fix the current price of provisions, there will always be a supply proportionate to the harvest. In case of famine in any one spot, the great agricultural tribunal of Pekin, informed by the provincial tribunals of the various harvests of the

Empire, will easily restore the equilibrium by causing the superfluity of the fertile provinces to be transported into those which are a prey to want. Thus the necessaries of life will always be sold at a moderate price, there will no longer be any classes in want, and the State, being the only speculator, will realise enormous profits annually, to be applied to works of public utility."

This radical reform entailed of course the destruction of large fortunes and the reduction of all classes to a more uniform condition, and this was precisely the aim of Wang-ngan-ché and his followers. This bold scheme did not, as with us, stop short at theory, for the Chinese are much more daring than they are reputed to be. The Emperor Chen-tsoung, persuaded by the arguments of Wang-ngan-ché, placed entire authority in his hands, and the social revolution began. Sse-ma-kouang, who had struggled long and fruitlessly against the reformer, determined to make a last effort, and addressed to the Emperor a remarkable petition, from which we shall quote the passage relative to the advancing of seed-corn to the tiller of the land.

"It is proposed to advance to the people the seed with which they are to sow the ground. At the end of winter, or in the beginning of spring, the officers will supply each man with the quantity they judge necessary, gratuitously. Immediately after the gathering of harvest, the same quantity and no more will be demanded back. What can be more advantageous to the people? By this means all lands will be cultivated, and abundance will reign throughout the provinces of the Empire.

"In theory nothing can be more attractive and bene-

ficial, in practice nothing more injurious to the country. We will suppose the grain distributed, and eagerly received by the people (though on this point I have much doubt); do they really make the use of it for which it is destined? Whoever believes this must have very little experience, and judges far too favourably of the common order of men. The interest of the moment is what concerns them most; the greater part never look beyond the day, and very few indeed trouble their heads about the future.

“The seed, then, is intrusted to them, and they begin by consuming part; they sell or exchange it for something which they imagine they need more than anything else. Corn has been given them; they leave off working, and become idle. But supposing all this does not happen: the grain is sown, all the necessary labours of cultivation are properly performed, the time of gathering the crop arrives, and they are called upon to repay what was lent them. The harvest which they have watched as it grew and ripened, and regarded as their own property, the well-earned fruit of their labours, must now be divided. Part must be yielded up, or sometimes, in bad seasons, the whole crop. How many reasons will be alleged for refusing to do so! How many real and imaginary necessities will stand in the way of the restitution!

“The tribunals, we shall be answered, which are established expressly for this department, will despatch their satellites to enforce the payment of what is due. Doubtless; and beneath the pretext of demanding what is due, what extortion, what robbery and violence will be committed! I do not mention the enormous cost which such establishments would entail; but, after all, at whose

expense would they be maintained? At the expense of the Government, the nation, or the farmers? Which-ever it may be, who will derive advantage from it? It may be alleged that this practice of advancing the seed has long been in use in the province of Chen-si, and that none of these evil results have taken place; it appears, on the contrary, that the people find it desirable, since they have made no request for its appeal. I have but one reply to make to this. I am a native of Chen-si; I passed the first part of my life there; I have been an eye-witness to the miseries of the people; and I can affirm that, of the evils under which they suffer, they attribute two-thirds to this practice, against which they murmur unceasingly. Let candid inquiry be entered into, and the true state of things will be made manifest.”*

The chronicles of the time add that on the side of Sse-ma-kouang were seen all the most distinguished men of the Empire, whether renowned for wit, experience, talents, judgment, or rank, and who all added their prayers and entreaties to his; then, changing their tone, they accused Wang-ngan-ché of disturbing the public tranquillity.

But amid the violent attacks and clamour that rose against him on all sides, the reformer remained ever calm and imperturbable. Possessed of the confidence of the sovereign, he smiled at the vain efforts of his enemies to ruin him. He read the declamations and satires which they presented to the Emperor under the name of respectful representations, humble supplications, and so forth, and appeared not to be moved by them in the slightest degree.

* *Mémoires sur la Chine*, vol. x. p. 48.

When the Emperor, persuaded by the arguments of his adversaries, was on the point of yielding and restoring the form of government to the old footing, Wang-ngan-ché would calmly say to him, "Why should you be hasty in this matter? Wait till experience has shown you the result of the measures which we have adopted for the benefit of your realm and the happiness of your subjects. Beginnings are always difficult, and it is only after overcoming many obstacles that a man can hope to reap the fruit of his labour. Be firm, and all will go well. Ministers, nobles, and Mandarins have all risen against me. I am not surprised at it; they cannot quit the common routine, and adopt new customs. Little by little, they will grow used to these innovations, their natural aversion will die away of its own accord, and they will end by applauding what they are now so eager to decry."

Wang-ngan-ché maintained his ascendancy throughout the reign of Chen-tsong; he put all his plans in execution, and overturned the country at his ease. According to Chinese historians, his social revolution was not successful; the nation became more deeply plunged in misery than ever. But that which excited the public opinion most deeply against this bold reformer was his attempt to remodel literature, and subject it to his despotic system. Not only did he change the form of examination for the grades of literary rank, but he caused his own commentaries on the sacred books to be adopted as the correct explanation, and ordered that the signification of the characters should be referred to the great dictionary which he had himself composed. This last innovation it was, probably, which drew upon

him the implacable hatred of the greater number of his enemies.

On the death of the Emperor, Wang-ngan-ché was immediately deposed; the reigning Empress sent for Sse-ma-kouang, who had been living in retirement. She named him governor of the young Emperor, and Prime Minister. His first step in this important post was to efface every trace of the government of Wang-ngan-ché, who died not long after; nor did Sse-ma-kouang long survive him. The memory of these two men has been by turns execrated with all the virulence of political passion; and in this, again, the Chinese have shown a strong resemblance to the Europeans.

The reigning Empress caused the body of Sse-ma-kouang to be interred with great magnificence, and the official epitaph adorns his memory with all the virtues of a wise man, an excellent citizen, and an accomplished minister; but his highest praise was the public grief at his death. The shops were closed; the people went into mourning; and the women and children who could not kneel beside his coffin, prostrated themselves before his portrait in the interior of their houses. These signs of sorrow accompanied the funeral wherever it appeared, on its way to the native place of Sse-ma-kouang.

Whilst witnessing the honours paid to the memory of this great man, it would not have been easy to foresee the reverse it was destined to experience eleven years later. The partisans of Wang-ngan-ché having contrived to return to the posts from which Sse-ma-kouang had displaced them, found means to cajole the young Emperor, who was now of age and sole master.

Sse-ma-kouang was stripped of all his posthumous titles, and declared the enemy of his country, — a measure which made a great impression on the minds of the Chinese. His tomb was destroyed, and the marble monument bearing his epitaph flung to the ground. Another was erected, bearing the enumeration of his pretended crimes; his writings were burnt; and, had it depended on these enraged persecutors, one of the finest specimens of Chinese literature would have been entirely destroyed. In the meantime, the memory of Wang-ngan-ché was restored to honour, and his political system pursued with redoubled ardour. In reading the history of these sudden changes of public opinion, we might well imagine it was written of some European nation.

Three years had scarcely elapsed before the memory of Sse-ma-kouang was once more adorned with all his titles and honours; and the name of the reformer, again loaded with execration. The socialist party were persecuted in their turn, and forced to fly the country: this was in the year 1129.

While China thus cast forth these bold innovators, the terrible Tchinggis Khan was rising into power in those steppes of Tartary which were soon to pour forth as conquerors their numberless hordes of barbarians. This coincidence is worthy of note, and seems to us to bear out a profound observation of a statesman gifted both with a great intellect and a noble heart.

Shortly before beginning this work on China, we were honoured by an interview with one of those rare men who, amidst all our civil discord, have preserved the esteem and consideration of all parties. We were speaking of those civilised races of ancient Asia whose

history is so little known in Europe, and which have no doubt experienced, like ourselves, great social crises, and suffered from mighty revolutions. "I have often thought," said the illustrious speaker, "that the invasions of barbarians, which at various times have overwhelmed Europe, may probably have resulted from some great social movement in the populous countries of Asia. These great centres of civilisation have no doubt been the theatre of terrible struggles, and the ferocious bands whose irruptions are recorded in our history might be those enemies of public peace whom society had forcibly expelled. This is only an *à priori* idea, which stands in need of historical proof; you might perhaps find it in the chronicles of the Chinese Empire."

This remark, proffered with the reserve which distinguishes superior minds, made an impression upon us. We were struck by the connection which we there perceived between the Chinese crisis under the dynasty of Song, and the formidable agitation manifested soon afterwards in Tartary. Since then we have more carefully studied the remarkable events which took place in high Asia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of our era, and the *à priori* idea of the Minister for Foreign Affairs has become for us an historical fact.*

After the final defeat and annihilation of Wang-nganché's system, his numerous partisans were forced to quit the country which they had hoped to make their prey, and where their attempts at disorganisation were remembered with detestation by all good citizens. They passed the Great Wall in large troops, and

* We hope that M. Drouyn de Lhuys will pardon our having borrowed his idea to place it on these pages in such unworthy company.

wandered into the deserts of Tartary. Here, leading a vagabond life, they soon communicated their unquiet spirit and love of change to the Mongol tribes, then remarkable for a fierce and savage disposition. These ferocious Nomads, who had not yet been humanised by Buddhism, were then so far from regarding the slaughter of an animal or the crushing of an insect as a crime, that rapine, plunder, and assassination were their pastimes. It may readily be imagined what a monstrous combination was produced by the union of these people with the refuse of Chinese civilisation! The whole of Tartary was soon in a ferment; and these vigorous nations, inoculated with the passion of revolution, could no longer be restrained within their own boundaries; they sought for other countries to overturn, and inundate with blood,—a world to ravage. Nothing was wanted but a man to organise and command, and Tchinggis Khan appeared. He gathered together the wild and terrible hordes of those regions, and led them in immense battalions even into Europe, crushing and overwhelming all that came in his way. The result of these tremendous invasions is well known.

CHAP. III.

ARRIVAL AT HAN-TCHOUAN. — CUSTOM OF PRESENTING A PAIR OF BOOTS TO A DISGRACED MANDARIN. — PLACARDS AND ADVERTISEMENTS. — PRIVILEGES AND LIBERTY ENJOYED BY THE CHINESE. — ASSOCIATION AGAINST GAMBLERS. — SOCIETY OF THE OLD BULL. — LIBERTY OF THE PRESS. — PUBLIC LECTURES. — EUROPEAN PREJUDICE CONCERNING THE DESPOTISM OF ASIATIC GOVERNMENTS. — CARELESSNESS OF MAGISTRATES. — REMEMBRANCE OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE VENERABLE PERBOYRE. — NAVIGATION OF A LAKE. — FLOATING ISLANDS. — POPULATION OF CHINA. — ITS CAUSES AND DANGERS. — CORMORANT FISHING. — SOME DETAILS OF CHINESE MANNERS. — BAD RECEPTION AT HAN-YANG. — WE FOLLOW A WRONG COURSE. — PASSAGE OF THE YANG-TSE-KIANG. — ARRIVAL AT OU-TCHANG-FOU.

THE sarcasms and pleasantries of the young military Mandarin of Hou-pé were received with a bad grace by our escort, Master Ting especially; but convinced at last, by many mishaps, that they were indeed in a strange country, they took them more in good part, which immediately had the effect of quieting the malice of their witty companion.

After several stages, in which there occurred nothing worthy of mention, we arrived at *Han-tchouan*, a town of the second class. The sun had just risen, a number of idlers were standing about outside the ramparts, and near the principal gate the groups were more numerous. We had the fatuity to imagine that they were assembled to see us pass, but we were never more mistaken.

At the moment when we were about to enter the city, there appeared, coming out, a brilliant procession, followed by an immense crowd, and we were obliged to stop to let it pass. The principal person of the procession was a military Mandarin of advanced age, and who bore the insignia of the *tou-sse*, an important grade in the Chinese army. He rode a richly caparisoned horse, and was surrounded by officers of inferior rank. Directly the procession had passed the gate it stopped, close to where our palanquins were placed, and the crowd pressed forward eagerly, making the air resound with cheers.

Two noble old men, magnificently dressed, and carrying each a satin boot, approached the *tou-sse*; they knelt down, respectfully pulled off his boots, and replaced them with those they carried. During this ceremony the people all prostrated themselves; two young men then took the boots which had been drawn off, and hung them on the arch of the town gate; and the procession moved on, followed by a large crowd, uttering cries of grief and lamentations. Our palanquins were also set in motion, and we entered Han-tchouan.

The streets were thronged with people, but so much preoccupied were they by the ceremony which had just taken place, that they hardly deigned to cast a glance on the two Devils of the West.

When we reached the Communal Palace, we hastened to inquire of the guardian the meaning of what we had seen. We learned that the military Mandarin had been stripped of his appointment, in consequence of calumnious reports spread against him at Peking; that he had been degraded a step in military rank, and sent to a less important post. The people, nevertheless, who had had no

fault to find with his government of Han-tchouan, had resolved to protest against this injustice by a solemn manifestation. According to custom the *Boots of Honour* were presented to him, as a mark of sympathy, and those which he had worn were retained to hang over the town gate as a precious *souvenir* of his good administration.

This singular custom is of most ancient date and universal practice; it is the means which the Chinese adopt to protest against the injustice of Government and testify their gratitude to the Mandarin who has really shown himself "The Father and Mother of the People." In almost every town of China, the principal gate is ornamented with a large assortment of old boots, dusty, and tumbling to pieces with rottenness and age. They are the glory of the town — one of its most precious monuments, for they point out how many good Mandarins the country has been fortunate enough to possess.

The first time that we remarked this singular appendage to the gate of a town, we taxed our powers of imagination in vain to guess what they could possibly do there, since it was evidently much too high to be a cobbler's stall. A Christian who accompanied us gave us the real explanation, but we scarcely believed it, nor was it till we had seen many town gates thus adorned that we were convinced they had not been practising on our credulity.

The Chinese, submissive as they are to authority, always find means of expressing their opinion, and of bestowing praise or blame on their Mandarins. The offering of a pair of boots is certainly a very original way of showing esteem and sympathy; but they do not confine themselves to this. A very powerful organ of

public opinion is the placard, and this is everywhere made use of with the dexterity of long practice. When it is desired to criticise a Government, to call a Mandarin to order, and show him that the people are discontented with him, the placards are lively, satirical, cutting, and full of sharp and witty sallies; the Roman pasquinade was not to be compared to them. They are posted in all the streets, and especially on the doors of the tribunal where the Mandarin lives who is to be held up to public malediction. Crowds assemble round them, they are read aloud in a declamatory tone, whilst a thousand comments, more pitiless and severe than the text, are poured forth on all sides, amid shouts of laughter.

Sometimes, instead of the vehicle of opposition, it becomes a sort of national reward to those Mandarins who have made themselves popular. Then satire is replaced by pompous eulogy, and the idol of the people is likened to all the most famous holy personages of antiquity. The Chinese, however, succeed much better in blame than praise, and their placards are much happier in insult than in eulogy.

The Chinese are not in the habit of bowing beneath the rod of their master so unresistingly as is imagined. It may indeed be said, and it is to their credit, that they are in general submissive to authority; but when it becomes too tyrannical, or merely fraudulent, they sometimes rise up with irresistible energy, and bend it to their will.

While traversing one of the western provinces, we one day reached a town of the third class, named *Ping-fang*, where we found the whole population in commotion,

and wearing a very unaccustomed aspect. We learned that the cause was as follows:—

A Mandarin had been named governor of the town of whom the inhabitants did not approve. It was known that in the district he had just left his administration had been arbitrary and tyrannical, and that the people had suffered much from his injustice and extortion.

The news of his nomination to Ping-fang therefore excited general indignation, which showed itself at first in the most violent satirical placards. A deputation of the chief citizens set off for the capital of the province, to present to the viceroy a humble petition to have pity on the poor people of Ping-fang, and not to send them a tiger, who would eat them up, instead of a father and mother to take care of them. The petition was refused, and the Mandarin ordered to set off to take possession of his post on the following day.

The deputies returned, bringing this sad news to their fellow citizens. The town was plunged into consternation, but did not confine itself to idle lamentations. The principal people assembled, and held a grand council, to which all the most influential citizens were invited. It was decided that the new governor should not be permitted to instal himself, and that he should be civilly ejected from the town.

The Mandarin arrived at the expected time, accompanied by a numerous suite, and, contrary to expectation, he encountered not the smallest sign of opposition on his way. Every one knelt at his approach, and paid homage to his dignity. He was convinced, therefore, that his fears of a bad reception were chimerical, and that all would go well.

Scarcely had he entered the tribunal, however, before he had had time even to drink a cup of tea, it was announced to him that the chief citizens of the town requested an audience. He hastened to grant it, under the impression that they came to offer their congratulations on his safe arrival. The deputation prostrated themselves, according to the rites, before their new Prefect; then, one of them stepping forward, announced to him, with exquisite politeness and infinite grace, that they came in the name of the town, to request that he would set off directly to return whence he came, for they would have none of him.

The Prefect, thus rudely disenchanted, endeavoured first to soothe, and then to intimidate, the rebellious citizens, but all in vain; he found himself, as the Chinese say, "*only a paper tiger.*" The spokesman very calmly told him that they had not come there to discuss the matter; that the thing was settled, and they had made up their minds that he should not sleep in the town. In order to leave him in no doubt as to their real intentions, he added that a palanquin waited before the door, and that the town would pay his travelling expenses, besides providing a brilliant escort to conduct him safely to the capital of the province.

It would have been impossible to turn any one out more politely. The Prefect still endeavoured to raise objections; but a great crowd had gathered round the house, uttering cries of a far from flattering or reassuring nature, and he saw that it would be imprudent further to resist. He yielded, therefore, to his destiny, and signified his willingness to comply with their demands. With much respect and ceremony he was shown to the door, where a handsome palanquin was in waiting, and

requested to step in. The cavalcade immediately set off, still accompanied by the chief men of the town.

On reaching their destination, they went straight to the Viceroy's palace. The chief representative of Ping-fang presented the Prefect to the Viceroy, saying:—

“The citizens of Ping-fang restore to you this magistrate, and humbly supplicate you to send them another; as for this one, they will not have him at any price. Behold the humble petition of your children.” Speaking thus, he handed to the Viceroy a long roll of red paper, containing a petition signed with the names of all the most important people of Ping-fang.

The Viceroy, with some appearance of dissatisfaction, took the roll, read it attentively, and then told the deputies that their arguments were advanced on reasonable grounds, and should be attended to; that they might return home quietly, and announce to their fellow citizens that they should soon have a Prefect to suit them.

When we reached Ping-fang the deputies had just returned, bearing intelligence of the perfect success of their bold measure.

Such incidents are not unfrequent in the Chinese Empire. It often happens that energetic and persevering popular demonstrations oppose the evil administration of the Mandarins, and force the Government to yield to public opinion.

It is a great mistake to fancy the Chinese hemmed in by arbitrary laws, and quailing under a despotic power, which rules their actions and dictates all their proceedings. Though an absolute monarchy, moderated, indeed, by the influence of the educated classes, the people enjoy beneath it much more liberty than is generally supposed,

and possess many privileges which we might vainly seek in some countries boasting a liberal constitution.

It has been written, and commonly believed, in Europe, that the Chinese are forced to follow the trade of their fathers, that no one can change his place of abode without the permission of the Mandarins; in short, that they are subject to a host of restrictions, repulsive to the feelings of the European. We do not know what has given rise to these prejudices, for it is very certain that throughout the empire each man follows the profession that suits him best, or none at all, without the Government interfering in the least. Every man is free to please himself, to become an artisan, doctor, schoolmaster, agriculturist, or tradesman, without having need of a licence or permission of any kind.

As regards travelling, nowhere can there exist greater freedom and independence of motion; each citizen may wander about among the eighteen provinces, and settle where he pleases, undisturbed by any public functionary. No one interferes with the traveller, who is sure never to encounter a *gendarme* demanding his passport. If the Chinese Government should unhappily take into their heads one fine day to adopt the ingenious invention of passports, poor missionaries would find themselves in a very lamentable condition. They would be unable to stir a step without false passports, which they might, no doubt, easily obtain by bribery; but this would be sorely against their consciences.

There is a law existing which enjoins the Chinese to remain within the limits of the Empire, and not to go vagabondising among foreigners, acquiring bad habits, and destroying the fruit of their good education; but the numerous emigrations of Chinese to the English,

Dutch, and Spanish colonies, as well as to California, prove that this regulation is not very strictly enforced. It is written in the Statute Book, like many others equally disregarded.

The liberty to traverse the various parts of the country unobstructed is almost indispensable to these people, continually as they are engaged in commercial operations. Of course the least impediment to free motion would check the great system of commerce which is the life and soul of this vast empire.

The freedom of association is as necessary to the Chinese as that of locomotion, and they possess it as completely. With the exception of the secret societies aiming at the overthrow of the Mantchou dynasty, and which are pursued with the utmost severity by Government, all societies are allowed, and the Chinese have a remarkable aptitude for forming them. There are societies for all trades and professions; robbers and beggars even have their associations; nobody stands alone in his sphere. It sometimes happens that the citizens unite to watch over the observance of the laws in places where the authorities are too weak or too negligent to maintain order. We have ourselves witnessed efforts of this kind which were attended with very satisfactory results.

Gaming is prohibited in China, but it is nevertheless carried on everywhere with an almost unequalled passion. One large village, situated near to our mission, and not far from the Great Wall, was celebrated for its professional gamblers. One day, the chief of a considerable family, who himself was in the habit of playing, made up his mind to reform the village. He therefore invited the principal inhabitants to a banquet, and towards

the end of the repast he rose to address his guests, made some observations on the evil consequences of gaming, and proposed to them to form an association for the extirpation of this vice from their village. The proposal was at first received with astonishment; but finally, after a serious consultation, it was adopted. An act was drawn up and signed by all the associates, in which they bound themselves not only to abstain from playing, but to watch the other inhabitants, and seize upon all gamblers taken in the fact, who should be immediately carried before the tribunal to be punished according to the rigour of the law. The existence of the society was made known in the village, with the warning that it was resolved and ready for action.

Some days afterwards, three most determined gamblers, who had not taken the manifesto in earnest, were surprised with the cards in their hands. They were bound and carried before the tribunal of the nearest town, where they were severely beaten and heavily fined. We stayed some time in this part of the country, and can testify to the efficacy of this measure in correcting the prevailing vice of the village. So striking, indeed, was the success of the association, that many others were organised in the neighbourhood with the same object.

Springing spontaneously to life, unaided by any government influence, these societies sometimes present a truly formidable aspect, and exercise their authority with an energy and audacity which the proudest Mandarins might envy.

Not far from the place where the anti-gambling society had flourished, there arose a much more redoubtable association. This part of the country is inhabited by a population partially Chinese, partially Mongol, and

is intersected by mountains, valleys, and steppes. The villages scattered amongst them have not been considered of sufficient importance by Government to be confided to the care of Mandarins. Deprived of the restraint of authority, this wild region had become the resort of many bands of robbers and miscreants, who exercised their trade with impunity throughout the neighbourhood, both by day and night. They pillaged flocks and crops, lay in wait for travellers in the defiles of the mountains, pitilessly stripped them of all their property, and often put them to death; sometimes they went so far as to attack a village and lay it waste. We ourselves have often been obliged to traverse this dreadful district to visit our converts, but it was always necessary to assemble in great numbers, and go well armed. Many times had the Mandarins of the nearest town been petitioned for assistance, but none of them had dared to engage in a conflict with this army of banditti.

But that which the Mandarins dared not attempt, a simple villager undertook and accomplished. "Since the Mandarins either cannot or will not come to our assistance," said he, "we must protect ourselves; let us form a *houi*." The *houis*, or societies of the Chinese, are always inaugurated with a feast. Regardless of expense, the villagers killed an old bullock, and sent letters of invitation to the villages all round. Everybody approved the idea, and the society was entitled *Lao-niou-houi*, or "Society of the Old Bull," in remembrance of the inauguration feast. The regulations were brief and simple.

The members were to enrol as many people as possible in their ranks. They bound themselves to be

always ready to aid each other in the capture of any robber, great or small.

Every robber or receiver of stolen goods was to have his head cut off immediately upon arrest, all form of trial being dispensed with, and the value of the object stolen not being taken into account. As it was easy to foresee that these proceedings would entail disputes with the tribunals, the whole society was responsible for each member, and took upon itself collectively to answer for all heads cut off.

This formidable society immediately commenced operations with unexampled energy and unity of purpose; heads of robbers, both great and small, fell with amazing and awful rapidity, and one night the Associates assembled silently in great numbers to take a *tsey-ouo* or *Robbers' Nest*. This was a notorious village lying at the bottom of a mountain gorge; the Society of the Old Bull surrounded it on all sides, set fire to the houses, and all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, were burnt or massacred. Two days after this frightful expedition, we ourselves beheld the yet smoking ruins of the Robbers' Nest.

It was not long before all the brigands of the country were exterminated or intimidated, and property was respected to such a point that the people would pass even a lost thing lying in the road without venturing to touch it.

These rapid and sanguinary executions began to make a noise in the neighbouring towns. The relations of the victims besieged the tribunals with their complaints, and loudly demanded the death of the assassins, as they called the Associates. Faithful to their oath, the society presented themselves in a body to answer all accusa-

tions, and contest the actions brought against them. They were by no means dismayed, having foreseen this probable termination to their efforts from the beginning. The trial was carried to the Criminal Court of Peking, which approved the proceedings of the Society, and banished a number of the functionaries whose negligence had caused all the disturbance. It was thought desirable, nevertheless, to bring the society under the authority of the Mandarins, and legalise its existence: the regulations were modified, and each member was required to wear a badge, delivered by the Mandarin of the district. The name of Lao-niou-houi was replaced by that of *Tai-ping-ché* or "Agency for the Public Peace," and this was the title which the society bore when we left the country on our way to Thibet.

From what we have just narrated, it may be seen that the Chinese make great use of their freedom of association, and are not such slaves to their Mandarins as is believed in Europe. Liberty of the press is another ancient institution of China, which we Europeans fancy we have invented, though in France we do not seem able to make it take root in the soil. Sometimes people seem enthusiastic in defence of this liberty: it is a fever, a delirium; and then, again, they no longer care for it, and seem, on the contrary, charmed at being deprived of the power of writing and printing their thoughts.

The Chinese say that the barbarians of the Western seas are too hot-blooded; they cannot take things coolly, and do not in the least understand the just medium that Confucius speaks of.

"We Chinese," they say, "print whatever we like; books, pamphlets, circulars, and placards, without any interference from Government. We may even print for

ourselves at discretion, provided we do not find it too troublesome, and have money enough to get the types carved. We do not abuse this liberty; we print what may amuse or instruct the public, without prejudice to the five cardinal virtues and the three social relations. We do not meddle much in public affairs, because we are persuaded that the Empire would not be well governed if 300,000,000 of individuals attempted each to make it go his own way. It does sometimes happen, indeed, that books are printed which might trouble the public peace and throw disrespect on authority, and on such occasions the Mandarins seek out the author of the crime and punish him severely. But this is no reason to prevent others from expressing their thoughts and composing books; the misdemeanor of a bad citizen should not entail the punishment of the whole nation. It seems that this is not the way in the countries beyond the Western seas; and it is not surprising, for we know that different nations have different tastes and dispositions. It is the disposition of the Western people to be excited to anger, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another; it is their taste to think their governments good one day and bad the next: it is evident that if such people were suffered to have as much liberty as we enjoy, there would be no end to confusion and disturbance. It may be good sometimes to change governments, but such alterations should not be rapid or frequent. One of our wisest philosophers has said, 'Unhappy the nation which is badly governed; but yet more unhappy the nation which, having a tolerable government, is not wise enough to keep it.'"

Although, when once plunged into rebellion, the Chinese yield to every excess of hatred, anger, and

revenge, it is yet true that they do not ordinarily meddle in politics or public affairs. Were it not so, a nation of 300,000,000 persons could scarcely have a moment's repose, with such elements of discord and insurrection amongst them as the freedom of association and the liberty of the press.

The Chinese have another institution, which, though good and praiseworthy in itself, might become a powerful agent for the excitement and fomentation of popular passions in the hands of turbulent spirits; we speak of the *chou-chou-ti*, or *Public Readers*. This is a numerous class of men, who travel about to all the towns and villages, reading to the people interesting portions of their history, accompanied always by their own comments and reflections. These lecturers are commonly good speakers, with a copious flow of words, and are often very eloquent.

The Chinese love to listen to them; they gather round them in all sorts of public places, at the street corners, and in the entrances of tribunals and pagodas, —and it is easy to perceive, merely at the sight of their faces, how lively an interest they take in these historic narratives.

Now and then the reader stops to rest, and he takes advantage of these pauses to make a collection; for he has no other revenue than the contributions of his auditors, and they are generally liberal enough. It is thus that in China, the land of despotism and tyranny, clubs are constantly held in the open air, though it is greatly to be doubted whether certain nations who think themselves far advanced in liberal ideas would not be much alarmed to see such a custom introduced among them.

It is general in Europe to regard Asia as the classic ground of despotism and slavery, yet nothing is more opposed to the truth. We do not think the reader will find the following passage too long, from the pen of M. Abel Rémusat, whose authority is great in such matters, because he regards the East with the just and impartial eye of a man who can rise above common prejudices and rest his opinion only on the truths of history.

“Amid all the changes of Oriental governments, there is one striking and unvarying feature, the absence of that odious tyranny and debasing servitude which have been represented as casting their dark shadow over the whole of Asia. I except the Mussulman states, which claim a separate study.

“Everywhere else the sovereign power, though surrounded by imposing state, is subject to severe — I had almost said to the only effectual — restrictions. Asiatic monarchs have been regarded as despots, because they are addressed kneeling, and approached only with the humblest prostrations; and those who have looked no further judge from appearances. Yet religion, customs, and prejudices oppose invincible obstacles to the free exercise of their will.

“A king in India, according to the divine lawgiver Manou, is like the sun; he dazzles all eyes, he is fire and air, sun and moon; no human creature dare contemplate him. But this superior being cannot lay a tax on a Brahmin, if he should be dying of want, nor make a labourer into a merchant, nor infringe, in the slightest degree, the injunctions of a code which is looked upon as revelation, and which regulates civil interests as well as religious doctrines.

“The Emperor of China is the Son of Heaven, and when

a subject approaches his throne he strikes the ground nine times with his forehead; but he can only choose a sub-prefect out of the list of candidates presented to him by the Mandarins; and if during an eclipse he should neglect to fast and to acknowledge publicly the faults of his ministry, a hundred thousand pamphlets, authorised by the law, would recall him to his duty in the observance of ancient customs. We should never think of erecting such boundaries to regal power; but in the East many such institutions set limits to the caprices of tyranny; and a power thus restrained can scarcely be called despotic.

“I have said *institutions*, and this modern and European word may seem misapplied when speaking of a half-civilised nation, who are ignorant alike of budgets, *comptes rendus*, and bills of indemnity. It does not signify here an act issued all at once by a legislative assembly to inform a nation that, after a certain day, they will have to adopt new customs and follow new principles, allowing always a reasonable time for change of habits and opinions. In this sense I confess that a great part of Asia has no institutions. Those laws and principles which guide the actions of the strong, and protect to a certain extent the rights of the weak, are merely the results of national character; they are founded on the prejudices of the people, on their social disposition and intellectual necessities. It is evident how deeply these are graven in their hearts, since no one has thought it necessary to print them. China is an exception in this case; she is in advance of other Asiatic nations, and has a right to European esteem, for she has long been in possession of a written constitution, and is in the habit of altering it from time to time, and introducing modifications. It

even descends to details neglected by us ; for, besides the functions of the supreme courts and the administrative hierarchy which are there determined, there are in it particular statutes to regulate the calendar, weights, and measures, the division of the provinces, and, moreover, *music*, which has always been an object of importance in the government of the Empire.

“ If, then, by despot is meant an absolute master, disposing at will of the property and life of his subjects, using and abusing a boundless power, I can see none such in Asia ; everywhere ancient manners and customs, and ideas received, even though erroneous, offer to the regal power restrictions more embarrassing than written regulations, and which a tyrant can only defy by exposing himself to destruction. I see only a few places where nothing is respected, where moderation is unknown, and might only is right ; and this is where the weakness or imprudence of the natives has suffered the establishment of foreigners from distant lands,—men whose sole object is to make a fortune as rapidly as possible, and then to return and enjoy it in their native country. They have no pity for men of another race, no sympathy with the aborigines, whose language they cannot understand, in whose tastes, habits, and prejudices they do not share. Harmony, founded on reason and justice, cannot exist between interests so diametrically opposed. Force alone can maintain this state of things ; absolute despotism is necessary to support a handful of rulers eager to seize on everything, amid a multitude who deny their right to anything. This is the state of things in the European colonies of Asia.

“ They are a singular race, these Europeans, and their proceedings would make a strange impression on an

impartial judge, if such a one could be found on the earth. Intoxicated by their own progress in modern times, especially by their superiority in the art of war, they look upon all other families of the human race with supreme disdain, as though all were born to admire and serve them, and that of them it was written: '*God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*' All must think like them and work for them; they walk abroad upon the earth exhibiting to the humbled nations their faces as the type of beauty, their ideas as the standard of intelligence, their arguments as the very basis of all reason; everything is to be measured by their scale; and who contests the justice of this arrangement?

"To each other, indeed, they still show some deference. In their quarrels among their various countries they observe certain principles, and murder one another according to fixed rules. But it is only within the limits of Europe that this holds good, and it is thought superfluous to observe the law of nations towards uncivilised people. Though confident of the skill of their soldiers and the excellence of their arms, the Europeans pursue a cautious policy. Inglorious conquerors and ungenerous victors, they attack the Orientals as if they had nothing to fear, and treat them when subdued as formidable enemies.

"Achieving by diplomacy what they have failed to do in battle, they victimise the natives alike in peace and war; binding them to pernicious alliances, imposing conditions on their trade, occupying their ports, annexing their provinces, and treating as rebels the tribes who cannot submit to such a yoke. It is true that they moderate their proceedings towards those states which

yet boast some vigour, and they show a degree of consideration for Canton and Nangasaki, which would be absurd in regard to Palembang or Colombo. *

“By a perversion of ideas, more strange perhaps than the abuse of power, our writers take part with our disappointed adventurers, blame the Asiatics for precautions rendered prudent and natural by our own conduct, and exclaim against their want of hospitality. We are indignant at their being suspicious of such dangerous neighbours, and when they decline the disinterested advances of our merchants, cry out that they reject the benefits of civilisation. Civilisation, as far as they are concerned, appears to mean cultivating the ground industriously, that the Europeans may be supplied with cotton, silk, and spice, paying taxes to them regularly, and changing, without a murmur, their laws and customs, in spite of tradition and climate. The Nogay Tartars have made great progress of late years; they have abandoned the nomadic life of their fathers, and the tax-gatherer knows where to find them when tribute is due. The ancient subjects of Queen Obeïra are much improved since the days of Captain Cook, for they have embraced Methodism, and attend divine service in black cloth coats, thus furnishing a new market for the manufactures of Somerset and Gloucester. Travellers have lately remarked with pleasure a prince of the Sandwich Isles holding his court clad in a red coat and waistcoat; and it was only to be regretted that the heat of the climate prevented his completing the costume.

“But, however imperfect and awkward these imita-

* This was written in 1829. M. Abel Rémusat would probably have omitted this sentence had he written in 1840, after the English war with China.

tions may be, however grotesque and useless, they are to be encouraged for their possible consequences. The time *may* come when the Hindoos will use our muslins instead of weaving their own, when China, instead of exporting silk, shall import it, when the Esquimaux shall shiver in calico shirts, or the inhabitants of the Torrid Zone melt under our felt hats and woollen garments.

“Let these people give up their own manufactures in favour of European trade; let them renounce their ideas, their language, and literature, all in short that composes their national individuality, and learn to think, feel, and speak like us, purchasing these useful lessons at the price of their territory and independence; let them be complaisant to our academicians, devoted to the interests of our merchants, tractable and submissive in all things, and they may be allowed to have made some steps towards civilisation, and permitted to take rank at a great distance behind the privileged people, the race *par excellence* to whom it is given to possess, to govern, to comprehend, and to instruct.”*

These remarks may be thought a little severe by general readers; but whoever has traversed Asia and visited the European colonies will be forced to confess that the conquered race is almost everywhere treated harshly and insolently, by men who pique themselves on their civilisation, and sometimes on their Christianity.

We have strayed very far from Han-tchouan and the happy Mandarin to whom the town solemnly presented a pair of boots at the moment of his departure. The reader has doubtless forgotten that it was *à propos* of

* *Mélanges Asiatiques.*

this manifestation of popular feeling that we were led to speak of the elements of liberty that exist in China and which sometimes exhibit themselves in such a curious guise.

The greatest panegyric pronounced by the people of Han-tchouan on their favourite magistrate was, that he always administered justice in person and in public. Among the Chinese magistracy this is now a rare merit; for things are fallen into such decay in that unhappy country, that the greater part of the Mandarins, whether from idleness or from reluctance to display their inability, never administer justice themselves. They sit in a private cabinet, generally separated from the tribunal by a partition only. The complainants discuss their affairs in presence of the scribes and functionaries, who retire from time to time to report progress, according to their own ideas, to the unworthy judge, as he lies on a comfortable divan, much more busied with his pipe and cup of tea than with the life or fortune of the hapless litigant. The judge is not even troubled to pronounce sentence; it is brought to him ready drawn up, and he has only to put his seal to it. This method has become so prevalent that a magistrate who takes the trouble to preside in person, and interrogate the disputants himself, is regarded as an extraordinary man, worthy of public admiration.

We were obliged to stop at Han-tchouan for two whole days, during which the wind blew with incessant violence. Nobody thought of embarking on the Blue River, for we had not forgotten the disastrous wreck of the Secretary of Song-tche-hien, and our repeated grounding on the bank.

Although little desirous of retaining the charge of our

precious and illustrious persons, the Mandarins of Han-tchouan preferred it to incurring the responsibility of a wreck. Regretting, however, to lose the advantage of this little storm, which refreshed the air delightfully, we ourselves proposed to our guides to continue our journey by land, hoping that the wind would not be strong enough to tear our palanquins off the shoulders of the bearers. But Master Ting objected, saying that the perils of wreck were much more imminent in the land journey than the river transit. We could not understand this until he further informed us that in leaving Han-tchouan it would be impossible to avoid water-carriage, as the river lay on one side and a great lake on the other, — one of the two we must necessarily cross. The boats with which the lake was navigated were so frail and ill-built that it was impossible they could resist the force of the storm; we were therefore obliged to resign ourselves to our fate, and wait patiently.

As soon as the wind abated, we resumed our journey by land. Five years before, a French missionary had followed the same route, also escorted by Mandarins and their satellites, but under very different circumstances. We were free, surrounded by homage, and travelling in comfort; he, on the contrary, was loaded with chains, and assailed with ceaseless insults by the pitiless wretches who accompanied him; yet in the eyes of the true faith was his progress a triumphal march, for he was going full of strength and courage to engage in a sainted struggle. After enduring long and frightful torments with unalterable constancy in the capital of Hou-pé, he perished gloriously with the palm of martyrdom in his grasp, and followed by the admira-

tion of the whole Catholic world. As we travelled along the route from Han-tchouan, sanctified by the sufferings of the venerable Perboyre, the details of that long martyrdom which we ourselves had had the consolation of narrating to our friends in Europe, arose once more in our minds, filling us with sweet emotion; our eyes were wet, but the tears shed over the memory of a martyr are more those of pleasure than of pain.

For two hours we followed narrow tortuous paths, now winding among hills of red earth, where cotton and indigo grew in abundance, now running through valleys between verdant plantations of rice. Soon we caught sight of the lake *Ping-hou*, whose blue surface, slightly ruffled by a light breeze, glittered in the sun as if covered with innumerable diamonds. Three boats were lying ready for us at the bank; our party was soon embarked; long sails made of bamboo, and folded like fans, were quickly hoisted, and we pushed off. The wind being insufficient, its place was supplied by numbers of rowers; towards noon, however, the breeze strengthened, and carried us rapidly over a magnificent lake. We encountered boats of every size and shape, carrying passengers and merchandise, as well as numerous fishing snacks, distinguished by the black nets hung on the mast. The various vessels passing and repassing with their yellow sails and striped flags, the vague indefinite murmur floating around, the aquatic birds hovering over the lake and diving suddenly after their prey, all this presented a most charming and animated picture to the eye.

We passed several floating islands, those curious productions of Chinese ingenuity, which no other people seem ever to have thought of. These floating islands

are enormous rafts, generally constructed of bamboos, which resist the decomposing influence of the water for a long time. Upon the raft is laid a tolerably thick bed of vegetable soil; and, thanks to the patient labours of a few families of aquatic agriculturists, the astonished traveller beholds a whole colony lying on the surface of the water, — pretty houses with their gardens, as well as fields and plantations of every sort. The inhabitants of these floating farms appear to enjoy peace and abundance. During the leisure time which is not occupied by the culture of their rice-fields they employ themselves in fishing, which is at the same time a pastime and a source of profit; and often, after gathering a crop of grain from the surface of the lake, they cast their nets and bring up a harvest of fish from its depths; for these waters teem with creatures fit for the use of man. Many birds, particularly swallows and pigeons, build their nests in these floating isles, and enliven the peaceful and poetic solitude.

Towards the middle of the lake we encountered one of these islands on its way to take up a fresh position. It moved very slowly, though there was a good deal of wind, and large sails were attached to the houses as well as to each corner of the island: the inhabitants, men, women, and children, lent their strength to aid its progress, by working at large oars; but their efforts did not seem materially to increase the speed at which they moved. However, these peculiar mariners do not probably trouble themselves much about delay, as they are sure of sleeping on land, at whatever pace they may go. Their migrations are often without any apparent motive. Like the Mongols in their vast prairies, they wander at will; but, more fortunate than these latter, they have constructed

for themselves a little solitude in the midst of civilisation, and unite the charms of a nomadic life to the advantages of a sedentary abode.

These floating islands are to be found on all the great lakes of China, and at first sight present an enchanting picture of happiness and plenty, whilst it is impossible not to admire the ingenious industry of these Chinese, so singular in all their proceedings. But when you consider the cause of their construction, the labour and patience necessary for their creation, by people unable to find a corner of the solid earth on which to establish themselves, the smiling picture assumes a darker tint, and the mind endeavours vainly to penetrate the future of a race so numerous that the land will no longer hold it, and which has sought a resting-place on the surface of the waters.

The traveller in the Celestial Empire, reflecting on its countless myriads of inhabitants, whose numbers increase year by year with frightful rapidity, is almost tempted to wish that China should experience one of those exterminating scourges by which Providence arrests from time to time the rapid increase of too fertile races.

The population of China has been the subject of much debate among European authors, who had no means of coming to exact conclusions. The Chinese statistics are, nevertheless, kept with care; and in each province the heads of families are required to inscribe their numbers in registers kept for the purpose, and the total numbers are collected and published.

The method of registration has varied much even in modern times; numerous classes of non-ratepaying individuals have been omitted from the census, and hence

results the difference in the calculation of the Chinese population presented to us at different times.

The three following accounts appear to be equally authentic, though the larger number surpasses the smallest by 183,000,000:—

| | |
|---|-------------|
| In 1743, according to Father Arniot . . . | 150,265,475 |
| In 1761, „ „ Father Hallerstein . . | 198,214,552 |
| In 1794, „ „ Lord Macartney . . | 333,000,000 |

The most recent census taken under the Mantchou dynasty raises the total number to 361,000,000. We have not the information necessary to examine this calculation and decide with certainty, but we do not doubt the correctness of the estimate in spite of the enormous number registered.

It is easy to form perfectly opposite ideas of the population of China, according to the route by which you traverse it. If, for example, in the central provinces you travel along the roads, you would be led to believe the country much less populous than it really is. The villages are few and far between, the waste lands so considerable that you might at times fancy yourself in the deserts of Tartary. But traverse the same province by the canals or rivers, and the aspect of the country is entirely changed. Often you pass huge cities, containing not less than two or three millions of inhabitants, whilst smaller towns and great villages follow each other in almost uninterrupted succession. It is difficult to conceive where these numberless multitudes, whose mere habitations seem to cover the whole surface of the land, can find means of subsistence, and the estimate of three hundred and sixty-one millions would seem rather under than over the truth.

A celebrated Chinese moralist, Te-siou, refers to "*tien*," or heaven, the alternate increase and diminution of the population of the Empire.

"The events," he says, "which cause the increase and diminution of mankind are so various and so closely connected, so slow and so efficacious, that policy and foresight are powerless to oppose them. A man must be very ignorant of our history to see only a chain of natural causes in the hidden manœuvres of heaven with the generations of mankind, increasing or reducing them according to its views for the whole Empire. A man must be very little of a philosopher not to see that war, pest, famine, and great revolutions confound every system, from the impossibility of foreseeing their causes, arresting their ravages, or calculating their ultimate effects on the population. The experience of past dynasties is lost to the present generation; the very measures successful in one century may become destructive in the next."

Though we respect the caution of the Chinese moralist, it seems to us, nevertheless, that several secondary causes might be assigned for the prodigious population of China; such as the general eagerness of parents to marry their children, the shame attached to dying without descendants, the frequent adoptions which perpetuate families, the retention of property in the direct line from the incapacity of girls to inherit, the immutability of taxes, which, always imposed on the land only, fall indirectly on the merchant and artisan, the marriage of soldiers and sailors, the wise policy of conferring nobility only on employments, which, by distinguishing men and not families, prevents their rank becoming hereditary, and destroys the vain prejudice of *mésalliances*, the frugal

way of life of all classes,—all these causes, perhaps, favour the rapid increase of the Chinese population, but it is doubtless referable above all to the profound peace which the Empire has enjoyed for the last two hundred years.

At the present moment this peace exists no longer; an insurrection, which broke out three years ago, threatens a general movement throughout the country, and the fall of the Tartar dynasty. If this revolution should resemble those which have preceded it, the details of which in the History of China it is impossible to read without shuddering, if civil war with its horrible train of massacres and incendiarism should continue much longer, the population will be frightfully reduced, and the Chinese who survive the carnage will be able to find abodes, without as now having recourse to floating islands on the surface of the lakes.

Just as our pleasant journey on the Pinghou was approaching its termination, we encountered a long file of fishing boats which were rowing back to their ports. Instead of nets, they carried a great number of cormorants, perched on the edges of the boats.

It is a curious spectacle to see these creatures engaged in fishing, diving into the water, and always coming up with a fish in their beak. As the Chinese fear the vigorous appetite of their feathered associates, they fasten round their necks an iron ring, large enough to allow of their breathing, but too small to admit the passage of the fish they seize: to prevent their straying about in the water and wasting the time destined for work, a cord is attached to the ring and to one claw of the cormorant, by which he is pulled up when inclined to stay too long under water. When tired, he is per-

mitted to rest for a few minutes, but if he abuses this indulgence and forgets his business, a few strokes of a bamboo recall him to duty, and the poor diver patiently resumes his laborious occupation. In passing from one fishing ground to another, the cormorants perch side by side on the edge of the boat, and their instinct teaches them to range themselves of their own accord in nearly equal numbers on each side, so as not to disturb the equilibrium of the frail vessel; we saw them thus ranged throughout the little fleet of fishing smacks on Lake Pinghou.

The cormorant is larger than the domestic duck; it has a short neck and long beak, slightly hooked at the end. Never very elegant in appearance, it is perfectly hideous after it has passed the day in fishing. Its wet and tumbled plumage stands on end all over its meagre body, and it hunches itself up till nothing is to be seen but a frightful shapeless lump.

Having passed Lake Pinghou, we re-entered our palanquins and arrived towards night at *Han-yang*, a large town on the banks of the Blue River. The shopkeepers were already lighting their lanterns, and numerous groups of artisans, who had finished their daily labour, were on their way to the theatre, singing and frolicking as they went, while at the street corners spectators were gathered round jugglers and public readers. Everything wore the lively animated air of a densely populated city, when, after the fatigues of a day of toil, all feel the necessity of a little rest and amusement.

The public promenade is a thing unknown to the Chinese, who cannot perceive either its charms or its wholesomeness. Those who have some notion of European manners think it very singular, if not utterly

absurd, that we should find pleasure in walking for its own sake. When they hear that we consider it a refreshment and amusement, they regard us as very eccentric, or entirely devoid of common sense.

The Chinese of the interior whom business takes to Canton or Macao, always go the first thing to look at the Europeans on the promenade. It is one of the most amusing of sights for them. They squat in rows along the sides of the quays, smoking their pipes and fanning themselves, contemplating the while, with a satirical and contemptuous eye, the English and Americans who promenade up and down from one end to the other, keeping time with admirable precision. Europeans who go to China are apt to consider the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire very odd and supremely ridiculous, and the provincial Chinese at Canton and Macao pay back this sentiment with interest. It is very amusing to hear their sarcastic remarks on the appearance of the devils of the West, their utter astonishment at sight of their tight-fitting garments, their wonderful trousers, and prodigious round hats, like chimney-pots,—the shirt-collars adapted to cut off the ears, and making a frame around such grotesque faces, with long noses and blue eyes, no beard or moustache, but a handful of curly hair on each cheek. The shape of the dress-coat puzzles them above everything. They try in vain to account for it, calling it a half-garment, because it is impossible to make it meet over the breast, and because there is nothing in front to correspond to the tails behind. They admire the judgment and exquisite taste of putting buttons as big as sapecks behind the back where they never have anything to button. How much handsomer they think themselves with their

narrow, oblique, black eyes, high cheek bones, and little round noses, their shaven crowns and magnificent pig-tails hanging almost to their heels. Add to all these natural graces a conical hat, covered with red fringe, an ample tunic with large sleeves, and black satin boots, with a white sole of immense thickness, and it must be evident to all that a European cannot compare in appearance with a Chinese.

But it is in their way of life that they hold themselves most particularly superior to us. When they see Europeans spend hours in walking for the mere sake of the exercise, they ask if it is not more conformable to civilised ideas to sit down quietly to smoke and drink tea when you have nothing else to do, or, still better, to go to bed at once. The idea of meeting to spend the greater part of the night in amusements and gaiety has not yet presented itself to them. They are like our worthy ancestors before they hit upon the plan of prolonging the day till midnight and the night till noon. All the Chinese, even of the highest class, go to bed in time to get up at sunrise, New Year's Day and certain family festivals excepted. On these occasions they do not allow themselves a moment's repose. In general, they follow the course of the heavenly bodies in their arrangement of day and night. At those hours which, in the great cities of Europe, are the most noisy and tumultuous, the cities of China enjoy the most profound tranquillity. Every one has retired into his family; all the shops are closed; the boatmen, the mountebanks, the public readers, have finished their sittings, and nothing like business is to be seen, except, perhaps, in a few theatres, which depend mostly on the favour of the working classes, who have only the night at their disposal, in

which to enjoy the favourite amusement of seeing a play.

We took more than an hour to traverse the long streets of *Han-yang*. At last they deposited us at the extremity of a suburb, in a sort of house which we know not how to describe. It was not a Communal Palace, nor a tribunal, nor an inn, nor a prison, nor a pagoda. It was, we were told, an establishment destined for a variety of uses, which the authorities of the place had prepared for our reception. We were received very coldly by an old Chinese, a little retired Mandarin, who introduced us into a spacious saloon, the only furniture of which consisted in a few dislocated arm-chairs, and its whole illumination in a large red candle made of some vegetable fat, which gave out, together with much smoke, a dull and lugubrious light.

The old Chinese filled his pipe, lighted it at the candle, sat himself down at the end of a bench, and began to smoke, without even looking at us. As the behaviour of this individual was little to our taste, we took no notice of him, but began to promenade the room at the risk of being considered barbarians. An entire day passed in a boat or in a palanquin, gave us, we thought, the right to stretch our legs a little.

While we promenaded, and while the retired old Mandarin silently smoked his pipe, our conductors had disappeared. We remained for a long time thus, and found the position rather unpleasant, since no Mandarin of *Han-yang*, either great or small, had honoured us with his presence, and no one had even had the politeness to order us a cup of tea, though, as it was very late, some refreshments would have been by no means superfluous. Our Chinese always maintained the same

attitude, without troubling himself about us in the smallest degree, and we on our side affected not to pay any attention to him. At length Master Ting appeared, and we asked him what all this meant, and what was to come of it, but saw by his surprise that he understood the situation no better than we did ourselves. However, it must end somehow. He then began to question the old Chinese, who was filling his pipe for about the tenth time, and he replied, without disturbing himself, and scarcely looking at us, that no one had given him any orders about us, that he did not know who we were, where we came from, or where we were going to; that he was himself very much surprised at seeing so many people suddenly invade the establishment of which he was the guardian, at so late an hour. After he had thus expressed his thoughts very phlegmatically, he replaced his pipe in his mouth, and began to smoke again. It was evidently impossible to enter into negotiation with a person of this stamp, so we determined upon paying a visit to the Prefect.

Our reception was polite enough, but extremely cold. The Prefect said he thought we should have gone that same evening to the capital of the province, on the opposite bank of the river, and consequently he had not made any preparation to receive us. "Since you are not going to Ou-tchang-fou to-night," he added, "I will go and give orders to have you taken care of in the House of Guests, whither they have conducted you." This meant that the Prefect had played us a trick *à la Chinoise*, to spare himself the expense and trouble of giving us an official reception. He knew very well, better than we did, that it was not possible for us to go in one day from Han-tchouan to Ou-tchang-fou, and that

we must necessarily pass the night at Han-yang. We thought it was not worth while to be angry about this, and we returned quietly to the above-mentioned House of Guests, with the prospect of finding our imperturbable Chinese still in the same place smoking his pipe.

We had, however, committed a great fault in taking leave of the Prefect so politely, and without speaking a little sharply to him; for, imagining that we were very easily satisfied, he did not fail to take advantage of it. We returned to our Chinese, whom, sure enough, we found still seated on his bench, and the red candle, though burnt down to a small end, was still alight, its great wick surrounded by a little flame and a great deal of thick smoke. One of the Prefect's servants soon presented himself, bearing a basket divided into several compartments, which contained a slender supper. On seeing him, the guardian of the House of Guests rose, and went into a neighbouring apartment to fetch a table, which he placed against the wall, and upon it the aforesaid red candle, snuffing it very dexterously by giving a fillip to the wick. Master Ting, who was hungry, had already taken his place on one side of the table, but his visage lengthened piteously when he saw the nature of the banquet sent us by the Prefect. A great bowl of rice boiled in water, placed between two little plates, one containing some morsels of salt fish, and the other some slices of bacon; this was the supper.

The Prefect of Han-yang seemed inclined to abuse the privilege he thought he possessed of treating us according to his will and pleasure. Master Ting was foaming with rage, and threatened to eat up the poor servant who had brought the basket. We had to exert all our

influence to restrain him, and make him understand that it was not fair to impute to this poor man the offence of the bacon and salt fish; but our vanity was so mortified at the proceeding, that we completely departed from the line of conduct we had marked out for ourselves in our relations with the Mandarins, and, yielding to a puerile emotion of pride, we told the servant to carry back the viands to his master, and thank him for his obliging generosity, and at the same time we begged Master Ting to go and order us a proper supper at the nearest tavern, since we meant to live at our own expense at Han-yang.

The Prefect's major-domo carried away the bowl of rice and the accessories, and soon afterwards we were doing the honours of a magnificent supper that we gave to the Mandarins of our escort, at the expense of two ounces of silver. It appeared to us at the time that we were acting with incomparable dignity, and that we had got most majestically out of the scrape. But our self-conceit blinded us, and hindered us from seeing that, after all, we had done a very stupid thing. We understood this the next day, after a night's rest had enabled us to take a more tranquil view of our position. We had forgotten that we were in China, and that Mandarins were by no means the men who could have any feeling of honour piqued. What we ought to have done would have been to have ordered an entertainment of the first class, and have made the Prefect pay for it, and after that to have remained one or two days at Han-yang. This strange system was so well adapted to the Chinese character, that it had succeeded perfectly all along the road. But we had been foolish enough,

in a moment of anger, to abandon it, and we had to suffer for our folly; for after that we had incredible trouble to recover our former position.

We quitted Han-yang with a lively feeling of satisfaction, without even regretting that ancient guardian of the House of Guests, who dismissed us with the same grace and amiability that he had exhibited in our reception.

The journey we were to make that day, though not long, was not, it was said, altogether without danger. We had only to cross the Blue River; and when we went to the shore we could see the vague and imperfectly defined outline of an immense town, almost entirely enveloped in fog; this was *Ou-tchang-fou*, the capital of the province of Hou-pé, only separated from Han-yang by the river, which in this place resembles a great arm of the sea. Multitudes of enormous junks were moving rapidly down or slowly up this "River Child of the Sea," as the Chinese call it. The wind was blowing from the south, which was favourable enough for us, as we only wanted a side wind; but it was extremely violent, and as the passage-boats we found stationed at the shore appeared much too slight for stormy weather in these impetuous waters, we hesitated a little before embarking in them. The example, however, of many other travellers, who made no difficulty, having reassured us, we entered a boat, which soon carried us away with almost terrific rapidity. When we were near the middle of the river, we met with a squall that sent our boat so much on her side, that her sails for a moment touched the water. At length, after a passage of three quarters of an hour, we arrived

without accident in the port of Ou-tchang-fou, where we were detained more than two hours opening a passage for ourselves through the prodigious mass of junks in the anchorage. After that we had a real journey to go through the streets of this vast city; and it was afternoon by the time we were installed in our lodgings, not far from the Governor's Palace.

CHAP. IV.

BAD LODGING IN A LITTLE PAGODA. — OU-TCHANG-FOU, CAPITAL OF HOU-PÉ. — LIMITS OF THE CHINESE EMPIRE. — MOUNTAINS. — RIVERS. — LAKES. — CLIMATE. — PRINCIPAL PRODUCTIONS. — CHINESE INDUSTRY. — CAUSES OF ITS DECLINE. — FORMER EXHIBITIONS OF THE PRODUCTIONS OF ARTS. — RELATIONS OF THE CHINESE WITH FOREIGNERS. — PRESENT STATE OF THEIR COMMERCE WITH EUROPEANS. — INTERNAL TRADE OF CHINA. — INTEREST OF MONEY. — SYSTEM OF CHINESE ECONOMISTS UPON INTEREST OF THIRTY PER CENT. — PECUNIARY SOCIETIES. — IMMENSE COMMERCIAL MART IN THE CENTRE OF THE EMPIRE. — SYSTEM OF CANALS. — APTITUDE OF THE CHINESE FOR COMMERCE. — MONETARY SYSTEM. — INFLUENCE OF THE SAPECK. — INFINITESIMAL TRADE.

THE place where we had been located since our arrival at Ou-tchang-fou was a little pagoda quite lately built, and of which the Bonzes had not yet taken possession. It was clean, but far from commodious. We had at our disposal but one narrow chamber, to which air and light only penetrated by a single skylight; it was opposite a high wall, and the heat in it was suffocating. All the Mandarins we saw promised to attend immediately to our request to be removed; but probably no one of them thought any more about it, for we were still left pitilessly in this hothouse. We were suffering now the consequences of the diplomatic blunders we had made at Han-yang.

The little Mandarin of that town, who had been charged to take us across the Blue River to Ou-tchang-

fou had, doubtless, not failed to compromise us by saying that we were very good sort of people, and easy to cheat. In vain did Master Ting protest the contrary —no one believed him. They knew that when the supper sent to us by the Prefect of Han-yang did not please us, we had very quietly, and without making any complaint, ordered another at our own expense from the *restaurateur*. Thus there was no necessity for them to give themselves any trouble ; we should always be quite content, if only they did not kill us.

Such were the consequences of a moment of weakness. We understood now how completely in the right we had been hitherto, in being obstinate and refractory with the Mandarins, who are always disposed to become the tyrants and persecutors of those who do not know how to make them tremble.

There was also, we found, another cause for the ill-will manifested towards us by the authorities of Ou-tchang-fou. Some months before our arrival in this town a Spanish missionary had been discovered and arrested in the province. He had been brought to the Capital, where he had had to undergo several judicial examinations, and after being harassed in various ways and detained long in the public prisons, he was taken to Macao (with a chain round his neck), conformably to the treaties concluded between the various European powers, at the conclusion of the war with the English. This good Spanish priest, whose patience and resignation greatly exceeded ours, had allowed the inhabitants of Ou-tchang-fou to assume a tone and deportment of which we now became the victims. If we complained, they replied that we ought to consider ourselves very fortunate that we were neither imprisoned nor put in irons.

We ought to be full of gratitude for not having our throats cut.

We considered, however, that it was our duty, not only for our own sakes, but for those of the missionaries who should come after us, to endeavour to combat these views. We formed our plan, therefore, and only waited a favourable moment for putting it in execution.

As our hot narrow cell was an extremely disagreeable place to stop in, we determined to take some walks in the town, in company with our dear Master Ting, who was longing exceedingly to see again his beloved province of Sse-tchouen, and to have nothing more to do with the barbarians of Hou-pé; but in order to be able to move more freely through the streets, without exciting public attention, it was indispensable to lay aside provisionally our yellow caps and red girdles.

Ou-tchang-fou was already well known to us, for in the first year of our abode in China we had had occasion to visit this great town, one of the chief commercial places in the Empire, and communicating with all the other provinces by the Blue River. We have seen that Han-yang is opposite to Ou-tchang-fou; another immense town, called Han-keou, that is, "Mouth of Commerce," is still nearer to it, being situated at the confluence of a river that throws itself into the Yang-tse-kiang, almost under the walls of the capital. These three towns, standing in a triangle, in sight of one another, and only separated by the river, form a kind of heart, from which the prodigious commercial activity of China circulates to all parts of the Empire.

They are calculated to contain together nearly eight millions of inhabitants, and they are so closely connected by the perpetual going and coming of a mul-

titude of vessels, that they may almost be said to form one.

This is the spot that must be visited by those who would wish to have an idea of the internal trade of China. But, before entering upon some details connected with the subject, which we hope may not be found without interest, it seems desirable to cast a glance at the geography and statistics of this vast and powerful Asiatic Empire, the richest, the most ancient, and the most populous existing on the face of the earth, or of which history has preserved any recollection.

China, properly so called, without counting its vast and numerous tributary kingdoms, is a great continental country, situated in the eastern and central parts of Asia. It is bounded to the south and east by the Pacific Ocean, to the north by the *Yn* chain of mountains and the great desert of Gobi, called in Chinese the "Sea of Sand," to the west by the mountains of Thibet, and to the south-west by the less elevated ranges that extend along the limits of the Burmese Empire and Tonquin.

Under the reign of *Kien-long*, second Emperor of the Mantchoo dynasty, three provinces were taken from the country formerly known under the names of Leao-tong, and Manchuria, and were added to China. According to this arrangement, the present frontiers of the Empire follow the northern shore of the Gulf of Leao-tong, proceeding from *Chan-hai-kouan*, one of the gates of the Great Wall, to the mouth of the *Ya-lou*: from this point the frontier line leaves the coast of the gulf, and extends from west to east across the peninsula of Corea, as far as the sea of Japan, following the shore of that sea in a north-easterly direction; it then proceeds northward to the point that marks the commencement of the

Russian frontier, a little way to the north of the mouth of the Amour, or Black River. Thence the line which separates the two empires follows generally the chain of mountains of *Hing-ngan*, then proceeds south-westward as far as the Black River, which it crosses at its confluence with the Argoun, and stops at the lakes of Koulun and Bouir. At this place the Chinese frontier line quits the Russian, leaving between the two the country of the Khalkas and Mongolia; then stretches to the south-east as far as the San-gari, which it crosses at Bedoune, and goes on again till it joins the wooden palisade of Leao-tong; following this barrier from north-east to south-west, to its junction with the Great Wall, at a short distance to the west of Chan-hai-kouan.

The Chinese frontier then follows the Great Wall, proceeding, with various sinuosities, westward to the Yellow River, and separating the country of the Mongols from the two provinces of Petcheli and Chan-si. After crossing the Yellow River, towards the middle of the branch which proceeds to the south, it runs first south-west and then north-west, between the country of the Ortoos on the north, and the province of Chen-si on the south; then joins the Yellow River a second time, towards the middle of that part of it which tends northward, crosses it, again taking a southerly course, after having embraced the territory of *Ning-hia*, and then coasts first the left and then the right bank as far as latitude 37° : from this point it leaves the river, turning to the north-west, until it has reached latitude 40° , in the department of *Sou-tcheou*, and continues to follow the same direction as far as 44° . That is the extremity of China on the north-west. The frontier then returns to the south-east, leaving the sandy deserts and the country of the *Kou-*

kou-noor, and having reached *Si-ning*, it descends to the south, coasting successively the provinces of *Kan-sou* and *Sse-tchouen*. Its direction becomes a little westerly in the countries where the great rivers that flow from the high mountains of Thibet pour their waters into the immense stream, called by the Chinese, *par excellence*, *Kiang*, or *The River*. After this it turns again towards the east, proceeds, with various sinuosities, between the country of the *Birmans* and *Cochin China* on one side, and the provinces of *Yan-nan* and *Kouan-si* on the other, to the point whence we set out.

According to the frontier line we have just traced, it will be seen that China presents the form of a circle, or rather of an equilateral parallelogram from which the angles have been cut off. It advances on the south to three degrees beyond the tropic of Cancer, and extends northward to latitude 41° , presenting, towards the north-east and north-west, two prolongations, of which one reaches beyond the 40th, and the other to the 56th parallel of north latitude. Without taking, for the present, these two prolongations into account, it will be seen that China is comprised between 20° and 42° of latitude, and 97° and 123° of longitude E. from Greenwich. Its entire area contains an extent of 1575 miles from north to south, and 1800 from east to west, or 2,835,000 square miles,—more than eight times the surface of France.

China forms a considerable portion of the immense slope from the mountains of Thibet to the shores of the Eastern Ocean. The mountains on its western side are dependencies of the great mountain mass of Central Asia, which is continued eastward by two principal

ranges; of which one bears the Chinese name of *Thsin-ling*, or Blue Mountains, and stretches to the south-east, between the parallels of 31° and 34° , and the other, known under the name of *Nan-ling*, Mountains of the South, east-south-east, between the parallels of 24° and 27° . The mountains of *Thsin-ling* and *Nan-ling*, marked in most of the maps of China as continuous chains, are in reality only mountain masses, of which the general direction is towards the north-east. The Chinese soil presents also several other great broken chains, formed of separate groups, tending in the same direction. Such are those which extend from the eastern point of *Chan-tong*, in the island of *Hai-nan*, and from *Thai-tong*, near the province of *Chan-si*, in the north, to the frontiers of *Tonquin*. This general direction from south-west to north-east is also that of the line of volcanos, which is continued across the great island of *Formosa*, the Archipelago of *Lieou-tchieou* and *Japan*, as far as the *Aleutian Islands*. The learned geologist *M. Elie de Beaumont* has shown that it coincides with the great circle of the terrestrial sphere which passes by the *Cordilleras of South America* and the *Rocky Mountains of the North*; whence it seems we may infer that the mountain system of *Oriental Asia*, and that of the great *American chains*, are of the same date. The earthquakes, the mud eruptions, the upheavings of the soil, which have been observed in *China* from the remotest antiquity, have in fact a striking analogy with phenomena of the same kind that have taken place in the two *Americas*. There is no volcano now in action in *China*, but it is certain that over a great extent of country the soil is volcanic; and in the province of *Chan-si* there are many volcanic vents, emitting sulphurous compounds,—

Solfataras, as they are called,—which are turned to economical uses by the inhabitants.

Parallel to these series of mountain groups in China, flow a great number of streams, which mostly fall into one or other of the immense rivers,—*Yang-tse-kiang*, that we have called the Blue River, and the *Hoang-ho*, or Yellow River. Both take their rise in the eastern mountains of Thibet, between 34° and 35° of north latitude. Their mouths also are at no great distance from one another; but during their course they leave between them a prodigious tract of country, of which we have already spoken elsewhere. As the Chinese geographers class the mountains according to their own ideas, and distinguish five principal ones, whose positions they describe mostly according to historical tradition, so also they mention four rivers, under the name of *Sse-tou*, “The Four Flowings;” namely, the *Kiang*, the *Ho*, the *Houi*, and the *Tsi*. To these must be added a considerable number of rivers that fall into the sea, but which do not equal, either in length or volume, the tributaries of the Yellow and Blue Rivers.

There are in China several great lakes, amongst which are distinguished five principal ones; namely, the Lake *Thoung-thing*, on the confines of *Hou-nan* and *Hou-pé*; secondly, the Lake *Phou-yong*, in the province of *Kiang-si*; thirdly, Lake *Houng-tse* in *Kiang-sou*; fourthly, the *Si-hou* or Western Lake, in *Tche-kiang*; and fifthly, Lake *Tai-hou*, or the Great Lake, on the borders of *Kiang-sou* and *Tche-kiang*. There are also other smaller and less celebrated lakes, principally in *Yunnan*.

The climate of a country that extends from the tropic to 56° of latitude, must of course differ excessively in

the different provinces ; and it does in fact present every variety of the temperate, and some also of both the frigid and torrid zones. The province of the Black River has winters like those of Siberia, and the heat of Canton is equal to that of Hindostan. You see reindeer in the north and elephants in the south.

Between these two extremes is found every variation of temperature and climate. Thus, at Peking, in latitude 40° , the thermometer falls during the three winter months to 30° below zero, and rises in summer to 30° of heat. At Canton, lat. 23° , the mean temperature is $22^{\circ}9'$. The air in China is mostly very salubrious, which is the more remarkable, as the most general cultivation, at least all over the southern parts, is that of rice. This advantage may no doubt be partly attributed to the happy arrangement of the great basins being open to the most healthy winds, but also partly to the wise measures adopted for the improvement of the country in the cultivation of the banks of the lakes and marshy lands, procuring a free passage for the waters of rivers and streams, and subjecting to judicious management the work of irrigation, which so materially concerns the prosperity of the Empire and the welfare of the inhabitants.

The entire surface of China may be divided into three zones, parallel to the equator, and of which the temperature and products are very different. The northern zone extends to the 35th parallel, and does not pass to the south beyond the lower valley of the Yellow River. The climate here is much too severe for tea, rice, or the common mulberry ; the land is mostly sown with millet and barley, which resists the cold better than wheat. A great many iron ores, and considerable beds

of coal, are also found here. This precious combustible is indeed found almost all over China; and especially in the province of Kan-sou. It is employed for the common fuel, as well as in the manufacture of iron, lime, &c. The central zone, bounded by the 27th or 26th parallel, and the mountains of Nan-ling, has much milder winters than the northern, and the rice and wheat are excellent there. It possesses, too, the better kinds of tea: the mulberry, the cotton tree, the jujube, the orange tree, the sugar cane, which was imported from India in the eighth century, and the bamboo, which is found, indeed, as far as lat. 38°, and which has been applied by the Chinese to a great variety of purposes. The eastern part of this favoured zone is celebrated for its manufactures of silk and cotton; the middle of it passes for the granary of China, and might feed the whole country from its enormous harvests of rice; the west is rich in woods fit for building. The southern zone, bordered by the sea, has the same natural productions as these, but not generally of as good a quality, as the temperature is much higher. Numerous metalliferous deposits are distributed throughout both zones: gold and silver in the provinces of the south and west; copper, tin, and lead, in the central province of Kiang-si; and mercury in abundance in various forms. Finally, the mountains of the south-west, in Yan-nan and Kouei-tcheou, are said to be rich in metals of all kinds. There are also found in China, the lapis lazuli, the ruby, the emerald, the corindum*, quartz; ollaris stone, of which vases, and especially inkstands, are made;

* A precious stone, of which there are many varieties, and which is said to be the hardest after the diamond.—*Trans.*

steatite, various kinds of schist, jasper and serpentine, used in the fabrication of musical instruments; and the precious green-stone called jade, and by the Chinese, who set a high value on it, *Yu*. It is found in Thaitong, in the province of Chan-si, but most of these stones come from Khootan, and are brought from Tartary by the Bucharrians.

China has a great number of native animals, amongst which are several that are little, or not at all, known in Europe. Horses are small, and not so valuable as in some other countries. In the north are found the camel of Bactriana, the buffalo, various kinds of bears, the badger, the rat, a particular kind of tiger, and several species of the leopard and panther.

The ox is less common than in Europe, and the pig is smaller than the European. There are several species of dogs with black tongues. The cat is domesticated, especially a tailless kind, very common in the south; and the white variety, with silky hair, is not unknown.

There are several species of *rodentia*, some of which, indeed, swarm so as to become a perfect scourge, and traverse the country in immense troops. The jerboa, the flying-squirrel, the otter, the sable are found in the forests, and the rhinoceros and the oriental tapir inhabit the western parts of Kouang-si, Yan-nan and Sse-tchouen. Many kinds of stags, goats, and antelopes, the musk-deer, and other less known ruminants, people the forests and mountains, particularly in the western provinces. In the south-west are also found many of the *quadrumana*, and even some large kinds of monkeys, nearly related to the *ourang-outang*.

China, so fertile in all sorts of natural productions, also possesses a treasure without which the most abun-

dant riches of the soil become useless; namely, the industry of its inhabitants. In all that concerns the material conveniences of life, the industry of the Chinese is marvellous. The origin of various arts among them is lost in the darkness of ages; but their invention is attributed to two personages, whose historical existence has often been doubted by the annalists.

Since time immemorial the Chinese have known how to manufacture the silk stuffs that have attracted towards them the merchants of the greater part of Asia. The manufacture of porcelain has been brought to a degree of perfection that has been only very lately surpassed in Europe, and which has not yet been equalled for solidity and cheapness. The bamboo serves for the fabrication of thousands of articles; their cottons and nankeens are renowned all the world over; they excel in making flowered satins, in which, notwithstanding the simplicity of their means, they succeed in producing the most varied designs; their crapes we have not yet been able to imitate. Besides their hempen cloths, they make a very strong kind with a sort of ivy called *ko*. Their furniture, their vases, their instruments and tools of every kind, are remarkable for a certain ingenious simplicity well deserving of imitation.

The polarity of the loadstone had been remarked among them 2500 years before our era, although no result favourable to navigation had been obtained from it. Gunpowder, and other inflammable substances, which they make use of for fireworks of a very effective kind, were known to them from a remote period; and it is believed that the bombs and swivel guns, of which they taught the use to the Tartars in the 13th century, may have given the

idea of artillery to the Europeans, although the form of the guns and cannon made use of at present was brought to them from France, as the names given to them attest. In all recorded time they have known how to work in metals, make musical instruments, and cut and polish hard stones. Wood engraving and stereotype-printing date in China from the middle of the 10th century ; and they excel in dying, embroidery and lacquered work. Very imperfect imitations are produced in Europe of some of the productions of their industry — their lively and unchangeable colours, their fine and strong paper, their ink, and many other articles, the manufacture of which requires patience, care, and dexterity. They are fond of imitating models that come to them from foreign countries, and they copy them with the most exact and servile fidelity. They even make expressly for the Europeans articles adapted to their taste; and images in china, steatite, or painted wood, are made so cheaply among them, that there might often be economy in getting them from China, as they could only be executed by European workmen at great expense.

We may observe, however, that manufacturing industry, like everything else in China, is in a state of decay, and visibly declining from day to day. Many important secrets connected with it are lost, and the most skilful workmen would now be incapable of producing the perfection and finish so much admired in the works of past ages. Thence arises the immoderate passion of the rich Chinese for antiques — *kou-toon*, as they call them. They seek with avidity for the silks, bronzes, porcelain, and paintings of ancient date, which certainly far surpass more modern productions ; but

not only do the Chinese of the present day invent nothing and improve nothing, they retrograde perceptibly from the point attained a long time ago.

This deplorable state of things is referable to the general disorganisation and the carelessness of government, which we have had occasion to mention so often. No one cares to offer any encouragement to the talents and merit of artists or artisans; there is nothing to excite any emulation among them; and consequently no one endeavours to make any progress, or to distinguish himself above his fellows. Every man of genius capable of giving a salutary impulse to art and industry, is paralysed by the thought that his efforts will remain entirely unknown, and are indeed of the two more likely to bring him punishment than reward from the government. It was not thus formerly, and the means now employed in Europe, which contribute so powerfully to develop all industrial capacities and talents, were once in use in the Chinese Empire. There were public exhibitions for the productions of the fine and useful arts; all citizens were admitted to examine them; and the magistrates never failed to praise and reward those who distinguished themselves by their diligence and success.

In the accounts of the voyages made by the Arabs in China in the 9th century, there is a curious passage, which serves in some measure to explain the astonishing progress made by the Chinese, at an epoch when the other nations of the world were plunged in ignorance and barbarism.

“The Chinese,” says the Arab narrator, “are, of all the creatures of God, those who have most skill in the hand in all that concerns the arts of design and fabrica-

tion, and for every kind of work; they are not in this respect surpassed by any nation. In China, when a man has made anything that probably no one else would be able to make, he carries it to the governor, demanding a recompense for the progress he has made in the art. The governor immediately orders the article to be placed at the door of his palace, and keeps it there for a year: if in the course of that time no one finds any fault in it, he rewards the artist, and takes him into his service; but if any real defect can be pointed out in the work, it is sent back, and no reward given to the maker.

“One day, a young man brought a piece of silk stuff, on which was represented an ear of corn, with a sparrow perching on it. No one on seeing it could doubt that it was a real ear of corn, and that a sparrow was really sitting upon it. The stuff remained for some time in the place of exhibition; at last a hump-backed man came, and began to criticise the performance. He was immediately admitted to the governor of the town, and the artist at the same time was sent for. Then they asked the humpbacked caviller what he had to object to; and he said, ‘Everybody knows very well that a sparrow could not perch upon an ear of corn without making it bend; now the artist has represented it quite straight, and yet he has shown a sparrow perched upon it.’ The observation was considered just, and the artist received no reward.

“The purpose of the Chinese in all this is to exercise the talents of the artists, and to force them to reflect maturely upon what they undertake, and devote the utmost possible care to the works that issue from their hands.”

It is easy to understand how these permanent exhibitions must excite emulation, and favour the progress of the arts. Thus at this epoch China had acquired such a marked superiority over all the neighbouring countries in this respect, that its internal trade obtained an astonishing development. The principal commerce carried on with the Romans was for silk, which was effected by the intervention of the Bucharrians, the Persians, and others; it is this which first made China known in the West, and called the Westerns to China. The foreigners who frequented its ports were so numerous, that towards the end of the 9th century 120,000 of them were massacred at one time at Han-teheou-fou, the capital of Tché-kiang. These are the terms in which the Arab writer describes these terrible executions:—

“Events have happened that have put a stop to the expeditions directed against these countries, which have ruined this land (China), and destroyed its power. I am going, please God, to relate what I have read relative to these events. That which has deprived China of the high position she previously held with respect to laws and justice, and which has interrupted the commercial expeditions towards these regions from the port of Syraf, is the enterprise of a rebel, who did not belong to the royal house, and who was called Bauschena. This man began by crafty and disobedient behaviour; then he took arms and began to pillage private persons. Little by little bad men collected round him; his name became terrible; his resources increased; his ambition took a higher flight; and among the towns of China that he attacked was Khan-fou, the port where the Arab merchants land. Between

this town and the sea there is a distance of some days' journey; its situation is on a great river, and it is bathed by fresh water.*

“The inhabitants of Khan-fou having closed their gates, the rebels besieged them a long time. That took place in the course of the year 264 of the Hegira (878 A. D.). The town was taken at last, and all the inhabitants put to the sword. Persons acquainted with the events that happen in China, report that there perished on this occasion 120,000 Mussulmans, Jews, Christians, and Magi, who were established in the town, and carried on trade there, without counting the natives killed at the same time. The precise number of persons of these four religions who lost their lives was known, because the Chinese governor was in the habit of levying a tax upon them according to their numbers. The rebels also had the mulberry and other trees cut down, which were upon the territory of the town. We name the mulberry trees in particular, because the leaf of this tree feeds the insect that makes the silk, up to the moment when the creature constructs its last dwelling. This circumstance was the cause of no more silk being sent from there to the Arab countries, and other regions.”

Whilst foreigners flocked to the ports of the Celestial Empire, Chinese merchants visited in their junks all the seas of India, and went to traffic in Arabia and Egypt. They visit even yet, for commercial purposes, the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, the ports of Cochin China

* This description is perfectly accurate. We have been on the spot where *Khan-fou* formerly stood; the port exists no longer, being filled up with sand, but the Chinese of the neighbourhood have preserved the memory of its commercial importance.

and Japan, the peninsula of Malacca, and even Bengal. As to land trade, they have at different times occupied themselves with it in a very active manner; and it cannot be doubted that it is the interests of commerce that have carried to Tartary the Chinese colonies established there, and also drawn thither the armies sent to the Western countries by the Chinese government.

At present there is an active foreign trade carried on along all the northern and western frontier. The Chinese get horses from Tartary, as well as the precious green stone called jade; musk and shawls from Thibet; furs from Siberia; soaps, leather, and gold and silver thread from Silesia and Russia. The neighbouring towns of the Birmah country get their European goods this way; and it was by the route of Little Bucharia, and the towns on the north west of Kan-sou, that the first silks formerly arrived in Europe; but the difficulties of transport have now for some time rendered the foreign commerce by land far less important than by sea.

The port of Canton was for a long time the only one open to European commerce, which, up to the end of the 18th century, sent nothing to China but its money to exchange for tea. Since the commencement of the 19th, it has sent also cotton goods, woollen cloth, wrought metals, watches, &c. India furnishes her spices, camphor, ivory, and especially enormous quantities of opium, the taste for which has been so rapidly propagated in China.

This vast continent yields to foreign commerce the value of about 7,000,000*l.* in exchange for above 9,000,000*l.* of raw or manufactured products sent to her from India and the west. The more or less considerable

consumption of the principal products of China, tea and raw silk, determines the importance of the exchanges that can be effected with the subjects of the Celestial Empire. China needs to sell, not to buy. With the exception of opium and Indian cotton, she accepts foreign goods only with the view of favouring her own export trade. According to these data, it would be easy to foresee the commercial opportunities that France might obtain for herself on this new ground, by the side of the other powers of Europe. England imports into her marts 54,000,000 pounds of tea; the United States, 17,000,000; Russia, above 8,000,000: as to France, she only takes the tea required for her own consumption, and that is less than 600,000 pounds. Raw silk is only taken by England and the United States, — England more than 2,000,000 pounds, representing a value of 1,400,000*l.* Of all the countries that seek an opening for their goods in China, British India is the only one that finds an easy market, and which can turn the balance of exchange in its own favour. China receives annually from Calcutta and Bombay to the amount of 1,200,000*l.* in raw cotton, and above 5,000,000*l.* in opium. British manufactured goods, by being sold at a very low price, have, notwithstanding the competition of Chinese industry, been introduced into the ports of Canton and *Shang-hai* to the amount of 1,320,000*l.* in cottons, and 440,000*l.* in woollen cloths.

The Russian cloths offered at Kiaktha and in Central Asia, and the American cottons brought to *Shang-hai*, accept the same conditions and submit to the same sacrifices. This burdensome commerce is maintained by means of the profits realised on the return cargoes, and it also excludes from the extreme East the productions

of France. Thus in the best years the exchanges of France with China have not exceeded a value of 2,000,000 of francs.*

In order to afford the means of estimating at a glance the relative importance of the commercial transactions of foreign nations with China, we will give an exact statement of the number of vessels belonging to each which entered its ports during one year.

FOREIGN VESSELS WHICH ENTERED CHINESE PORTS
IN 1850.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| England | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 374 |
| United States | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 183 |
| Holland | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 29 |
| Spain | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13 |
| Various nations | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 22 |
| France | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 |

This commerce is doubtless of considerable importance to England and the United States, but its influence is very little felt in this vast Chinese Empire, and this immense population of traders. The trade with foreigners might cease suddenly and completely, without causing any sensation in the interior provinces. The great Chinese merchants in the ports open to the Europeans would doubtless feel it; but it is probable that the Chinese nation would not experience the least inconvenience. The price of tea and silk would fall, and that of opium would rise, but only for a short time, for the Chinese would soon raise it in abundance. The course of business would suffer no embarrassment, since, as

* *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1st Sept. 1841, by M. Jurien de la Gravière, whose numerous and interesting works afford a proof that it is possible to be at the same time a distinguished sailor and a highly gifted writer.

M. Jurien de la Gravière, truly observes, "China has need to sell and not to buy." Its rich and fertile provinces furnish all that it requires; it has within its own limits all that is either necessary or useful, and Europe can only supply it with articles of luxury and fancy. The cotton goods brought to China, enormous as their amount appears, can be in reality but a feeble resource for the immense consumption of more than 300,000,000 of men.

If, then, the Chinese government has never, at any time, favoured foreign commerce; if it has even endeavoured to paralyse and crush it; it was because it has always considered it as prejudicial to the true interests of the country. Commerce, according to the Chinese, can only be serviceable to the Empire inasmuch as by giving up superfluous articles, it acquires what are necessary and useful. This principle being admitted, they infer from it, that as the trade with foreigners diminishes the quantity of silk, tea, and porcelain, and consequently increases the price of these articles in all the provinces, it is really disadvantageous to the Empire, and it is for this reason they have always endeavoured to fetter it. The various objects of luxury, the precious trifles brought by European ships, have never created any illusion on this subject for the Government, and it has desired only the commerce with the Tartars and Russians, by which it obtains the furs and leather that it really requires, and always in the way of barter.

The Chinese have by no means the same ideas as the Europeans on the subject of commerce. Kouan-tse, a celebrated economist of the Celestial Empire, who lived more than two thousand years ago, expresses himself thus: "The money which enters a kingdom by commerce

only enriches it in the same proportion as that which goes out. There is no commerce permanently advantageous but the exchange of things useful and necessary. The trade in articles of pomp, elegance, or curiosity, whether carried on by exchange or by money payments, supposes the existence of luxury; now luxury, which is the abundance of what is superfluous among certain citizens, supposes the want of necessaries among others. The more horses the rich put to their chariots, the more people will have to walk on foot; the more their houses are vast and magnificent, the more those of the poor are small and miserable; the more their tables are covered with dainties, the more people there are reduced to eat only rice.

“The best that can be done for men in a social state by means of industry and labour is that all should have the necessaries, and some the conveniences of life.”

As these are the principles of the Chinese government, it is easy to see that European productions will never have a very extensive market in China; at all events as long as the Chinese remain what they are without any considerable modification in their tastes and habits. As foreign commerce cannot offer them any article of primary necessity, nor even of any real utility, they will interest themselves very little in its extension, and they would see it stopped altogether, not only without uneasiness, but with a certain feeling of satisfaction.

The case would certainly not be the same in England; a total interruption of the trade with China would be for her a most disastrous event. The life and movement of that colossal power would be immediately paralysed in India; from the extremities the evil would

rapidly reach the heart, and before long there would be seen, even in the metropolis, symptoms of a mortal malady. Her possessions in India are the most fertile source of the wealth and power of Great Britain, and these possessions are nourished by China. The English are perfectly aware of this, and that is why they have in these latter years bravely taken the resolution to endure all the offences of the Chinese Government, rather than by coming to a new rupture with it to arrest the great commercial movement which is one of the principal sources of the prosperity of India.

One excellent reason why the Chinese care little about foreign commerce is, that their internal trade is so extensive, and employs vessels of all sizes, which are continually furrowing the rivers and canals by which the Empire is watered throughout its whole extent. This trade consists principally in the exchange of the grain, salt, metal, and other natural and artificial productions of the various provinces.

China is a country so vast, so rich, so varied, that its internal trade alone would suffice abundantly to occupy that part of the nation which can be devoted to mercantile operations. There are in all the great towns important commercial establishments, into which, as into reservoirs, the merchandise of all the provinces discharges itself. To these vast storehouses people flock from all parts of the Empire, and there is a constant bustle going on about them—a feverish activity that would scarcely be seen in the most important cities of Europe. The channels of communication, although often very inconvenient, are at all times thronged with merchandise, which is carried in boats, on carts, barrows, and the backs of men and of beasts of burden.

The government itself carries on trade, by laying up

in store in the granaries that are found in many of the chief towns, the excess of corn that it receives in tribute, and selling it to its subjects in times of scarcity. A part of the pawnbroking establishments, so numerous in China, also belong to the government. The rate of interest is two per cent. per month for articles of clothing, and three per cent. for jewels and articles of the metallic kind. The legal interest of money has been fixed at 30 per cent. per annum, which makes three per cent. per month, as the sixth, the twelfth, and the intercalary moon (when there is one) do not bear interest.

One would like to know what object the Chinese government had in view, in fixing the interest of money at so enormous a rate, and to understand their mode of regarding questions of political and social economy. According to Tchao-yng, a distinguished writer of the Celestial Empire, the purpose was to prevent the value of land from increasing, and that of money from diminishing by the mediocrity of interest. In fixing it at a very high rate, it has endeavoured to render the distribution of land proportioned to the number of families, and the circulation of money more active and uniform.

“It is evident,” he says, “that money being inferior to land, as being more casual in itself, and in the income derived from it, the same value in land will always be preferred to that which is in money. It is evident, also, that in order not to run the risks to which money is liable, people will like even to possess a smaller value in land, with greater security. This smaller value is proportioned to the risks of money and its profits.

“The more the interest of money is raised, the more land is required, all risks being compensated, to equal

it, as you must have a greater number of acres of bad land to equal a smaller of that which is good and fertile. Now the more land is required to equal money, the easier is it for the poor citizens to preserve what land they have, and even to acquire a certain quantity; since it is not needful for that to be rich; and for the same reason the divisions are easy in families, and advantageous to the state for the lands which the government has had especially in view. Why? Because property in land produces always more to those who cultivate it themselves, and that the rich, who possess more than they can cultivate, lose for the state in neglecting their lands, or making them over to others, what those gain who are their own cultivators—a certain and inevitable loss, to which must also be added the risks of the harvest and the casualties of payment; a loss, consequently, which, being aggravated by these risks, renders the purchase of land less advantageous to them than to the poor, and must facilitate it to the latter in the same proportion that it disgusts the former.”

After having shown by examples that the landed possessions of the people have always increased in proportion as the interest of money was high, T'chao-ying concludes thus:—“The great advantage which the law of interest at thirty per cent. has aimed at and obtained is, that the cultivators of land, who are the most numerous, the most useful, the most moral and laborious portion of the community, may possess property in land, and have enough to subsist upon without being rich, and not be the unfortunate slaves of the monied interest, of those citizens who fatten their useless idleness on the fruit of the labour of these unfortunate men.”

Tchao-yng endeavours afterwards to prove that the rate of thirty per cent. being the mean between the revenue of good land and the profits of wholesale trade, was precisely what was needed to stimulate commerce, and bring idle money into circulation. "Whoever has good lands," he says, "will not leave them to lie fallow, because, if he be not insane, he will not deprive himself in dead loss of the harvests with which every year they may fill his granaries. Whoever has property or money would be equally insane if he allowed it to lie idle in his coffers; since, if there is more risk in placing it than in cultivating land, there is also more considerable profit.

"Everybody agrees that a merchant never keeps money locked up in his chest, since the powerful attraction of gain continually draws it out. The law of thirty per cent. being established, the same attraction must produce the same effect upon all those who have it. We see, therefore, that since money has borne this high interest, no one thinks of hoarding it, and the circulation of it has been more general, lively, and continual."

Another economist, named Tsien-tche, maintains that the legal interest of thirty per cent. is intended to facilitate commerce. It will be seen that the Chinese are as advanced as we are in the art of making formulas.

"A well-organised society," says Tsien-tche, "would be that in which every one labouring according to his powers, his talents, and the public necessities, all property would be divided in such proportions as should secure its enjoyment to every one at the same time.

"The richest state would be that in which a small amount of labour would furnish the productions of nature and art in abundance superior to the numbers and the

wants of the inhabitants. Wealth has necessarily a relation to wants. The Empire was richer, with a smaller amount of property under the first dynasties, because less labour produced more in proportion to the number of the inhabitants."

"The population of the Empire is such at present that the pressing interest of common necessity requires us to draw all that can be drawn from the fertility of the land and the industry of man. In order to effect this, we must cultivate in every place what best flourishes in it, and work up all the materials we have. The superabundant produce of some localities may then become a help to others that are deficient, and it is for commerce to undertake their transport.

"The necessity of commerce in the Empire is equal to the necessity of exchanges, and the utility of commerce to their utility—that is to say, the necessity is absolute, and the utility universal and continual.

"We must distinguish in commerce things and places. Its totality embraces the productions of nature and art—the necessary, the useful, the convenient, the agreeable, and the superfluous.

"There is a commerce between family and family in the same place, a commerce from village to village, from town to town, from province to province; and it is easy, continual, and universal, on account of proximity; a commerce, finally, of the capital with the provinces, and of the provinces among themselves, however distant they may be from one another."

"If all the goods of the Empire belonged to the State, and that the State would undertake the distribution of them, it must necessarily undertake these exchanges which are effected by commerce, by carrying the super-

abundance of one place to another ; and in that case, it would have to assign a salary to those who should undertake this duty, as it does to magistrates and soldiers, &c., and this office, which has nothing in it but what is noble and great, since it stands in direct relation with the public felicity, would become honourable. Merchants, however, undertake to render this important service to society at their own risk and peril. The proportion, and the correspondence of the exchanges of productions, is neither uniform, constant, nor convenient enough to provide for the varied and continual wants of society ; but money, as the sign and equivalent of a fixed and recognised value, supplies this want so much the more easily, as it lends itself with facility and promptitude to all the proportions, divisions, and correspondences of exchange. Money is the spring and the leaven of commerce, and commerce can only be flourishing inasmuch as the circulation of money facilitates, increases, accelerates, and perpetuates the multitude of exchanges.

“The ancient equilibrium and proportional distribution of property having been destroyed, it is evident that there are a great number of citizens whose expenses are less than their receipts, and who, consequently, can put by money, or at least are in no hurry to make use of it. It is not less evident to the government, watchful that the totality of money circulating in the Empire should be proportioned to the value and quantity of the innumerable exchanges of commerce, that the money withdrawn from circulation by these reserves diminishes the facility, the uniformity, and the continuity of these exchanges in proportion to its quantity. Everything, therefore, which tends to restore

it to circulation, and to keep it there, is for the benefit of commerce.

“The law does what it can, by forcing those to whom the State gives most, to be at the greatest expense; custom and propriety do so still more, but that is not sufficient. The high interest of money, however, supplies this want, by securing the profits which tempt cupidity. If there are any that resist so powerful an attraction, it is a new proof that a smaller interest would have still less drawn it out, and would have deprived commerce of just so much advantage.

“As the need of money in commerce is always pressing and universal, on account of its immensity and its infinite divisions and ramifications, the smallest sums find a place in it, and are enticed by the temptation of profit—a temptation so much the more powerful to the labourer and the artisan, that the smallest loss affects his well-being, and that if he entrusts his money to commerce, he may withdraw it when he will.

“Merchants and traders, if they had sufficient funds to do without the help of loans, which is impossible on account of the inequality of fortunes, and of the proportion of the money in circulation with the value of exchanges throughout the Empire—could merchants and traders, I say, do without the continual assistance of loans—it would be in the interest of commerce that they should make them, and that they should be rendered lucrative in order to interest the public in its success.

“If the facility, the convenience, and the safety of transports by land and water are carefully watched over; if everything relating to commerce in sales, purchases, and the despatch of goods, is effected with so

much celerity and good faith ; if the privileges of fairs and markets are so scrupulously preserved ; if the police kept there is so attentive and so mild ; if the malversations and tyrannies of custom-house officers are punished with so much energy, it is because almost every one has property engaged in commerce, or is interested for those who have. Government must demand the assistance which is its due, and which it is so important to all the citizens to procure for it ; and the high interest of money is an infallible method of effecting this. This law of thirty per cent. was a grand *coup d'état*."

The economist Tsien-tche afterwards refutes the adversaries of the law of thirty per cent., one of whom, Leang-t sien, says, "The ancients tolerated only a low rate of interest ; that of thirty per cent. is an injustice and a public oppression. It is impossible to imagine more flagrant usury." We might content ourselves with replying, first, that the fact alleged is at least doubtful, since we cannot open the ancient authors, or even the sacred books, without perceiving that the profits of trade were prodigious under the beautiful and celebrated dynasty of the Tcheou ; and it is not natural to suppose either that merchants always traded with their own funds, or that those who lent to them did not desire to share the profits made with their own money ; all that one can say is, that a high rate of interest was not authorised by law ; but as we do not find that it was prohibited, it would be necessary to inquire whether what we have lost of those laws contained the condemnation or the apology of high interest.

"Secondly, we may reply that the proportions have all been changed with the increase of the population. A father may be obliged to govern his family differently

when he has twelve children to what he did when he had only three or four. Thirdly, that it is terrible to accuse of injustice and usurious oppression a law that zeal for the public good alone has dictated,—which has been received with thanks throughout the Empire, which is equally for the profit of all, and as it only *permits*, not enjoins, this rate, is no restraint on any one,—which is now several centuries old, and which replies to all objections by the present state of the Empire and of commerce.”

“A shop on the great street that runs towards the first entrance of the Imperial Palace lets for four times as much as it would let for if it were in a more ordinary and less frequented quarter. What is the reason of this augmentation of rent? Why should this disproportion exist between two houses whose real value is the same, since they have cost the same sum to build? It is because, although it only depends on myself, if I am the owner, to profit by its advantageous commercial position, I yield my right to the merchant on condition that he shall make me amends, by increasing the rent in proportion to the profit it will procure for him, and which I have given up to him. The case is the same with the money lent to merchants.

“Commerce has its revolutions, its accidents, its faults, its losses, its failures in good faith; of which the general result reduces the sum total of the property embarked in it to an interest that does not exceed by more than four or five per cent. the ordinary return from good land. Is that too much advantage to secure for it the loans it requires, and compensate those who embark their money in it for the risks they run? The public at large always gains in the loans made to commerce, but

there are many individuals who lose their interest, or even their capital. The flux and reflux of the loss and gain must necessarily be taken into the account in the rate of interest of money, and so much the more that, whether by reason of the population, or of the constitution of the government, and of the public administration, the greater part of the funds engaged in commerce must be borrowed."

"The State has laid no other tax on commerce than that of the customs; the merchant and the trader, however rich they may be, whatever expense the State may go to to secure the facility and convenience of their trade, give nothing in return, although they gather its best fruits. This policy is wise and equitable, for as the merchant and trader derive their revenues from the public by the profits of their trade, they would make the consumers pay any tax that might be demanded of them; the State would therefore, in that case, only have made them receivers of taxes. If, however, the necessities of the State should require the imposition of a tax on commodities the consumption of which is common to all classes, and in proportion to the fortunes of individuals, it is evident that it should be a tax of which the distribution should be most equitable, and least burdensome to the poor. Every one would admit this. Our literary men, who have cried out against the interest of thirty per cent. understand nothing of political administrations. Let us change the names, and this will be demonstrated. To what does the excess of interest obtained at present over the whole Empire amount beyond what was obtained under the dynasty of Tang, nine centuries ago? Let us take it at ten millions of ounces of silver. Who would object, if the State should demand such a sum as this, over and above

the ordinary imposts, for the purpose of providing for the interests of commerce in the interior of the Empire? Well, the decree authorizing a rate of thirty per cent. interest for money, has created such a tax, and the State yields it to those who lend their money to their fellow-citizens for the purposes of commerce. It is on the profits of trade, and not on the public at large, that this tax is levied, and in the most advantageous manner, since every one pays it in proportion to his consumption. All that there is peculiar in this impost is, that the State yields it to the public, without making it pass through the treasury of the Empire, and without being obliged to increase it by the expenses of collection.

“How is it that the high rate of interest fixed by the law affords advantage to commerce? Because it opens a career to those who have the talent for it, and favours its division among a greater number. The genius for commerce is a peculiar one, like that for letters, for government, for the arts; possibly even one might say that, in some respects, it embraces them all. Now this genius for commerce is lost to the Empire in all those who follow a different career; it remains therefore to develop it in those who have no other resource. Although commerce is indisputably necessary to the State, yet the administration which goes to so much expense to facilitate study, and to form by that means men capable of political business, does nothing for those who have a genius for commerce to assist them in its development. Now the high interest of money makes amends for this kind of neglect. However poor a young man may be, if he is well conducted and clever, he will be able to borrow enough to make an attempt; and as soon as this succeeds, all purses will be open to him,

and this interest law will have given to the Empire a useful citizen, who would have been lost if a helping hand had not been held out to him. Now, when men can enter into business without having any money of their own, commerce must necessarily be divided among a great number, and that is what the present state of the population renders desirable.

“A man, whatever he may be, has but a certain amount of time and strength to employ. If his business demands more, he must call in help, that is to say, he must buy the services of others; they cost him little, for the most part, and he endeavours to obtain the utmost advantage from them. What he gains by these assistants, by degrees releases him from the necessity of working himself, and the public is charged with the burden of his idleness. It was asked by So-ling why he had lent twenty thousand ounces of silver from the public treasury to twelve small traders. ‘It was,’ he replied, ‘in order that the public might not any more have to pay for the lacquered work, the shows, the festivals, concubines, and slaves of him who has monopolised the silk factories. Rivalry in trade obliges traders to emulate each other in labour and industry; that is to say, to be less extortionate towards the public.’”

It would be, we presume, superfluous to warn the reader, that in quoting these passages, perhaps at rather too great length, we by no means intended to express our assent to all the doctrines of the Chinese economists. Many of these perplexed questions are too far above our knowledge on such subjects for us to pretend to offer any opinion on them. We wished merely to show the mode of thinking of the Chinese writers. It is so com-

mon for people in Europe to form their opinions of the Chinese from the drawings on screens and fans, and to regard them merely as more or less civilised baboons, that we were glad to have an opportunity of showing how they treat questions of policy and social economy.

In order to facilitate commercial operations, the Chinese have invented pecuniary societies, which are found over the whole Empire, the object of which is to avoid the burden of fixed debts, bearing interest. The members of these societies agree among themselves upon a certain sum to be contributed by each on the first of every month; on this same day lots are drawn for the whole sum, and so on every month till every one has had his turn. As this would, however, be rather unfair towards the last comers, the sum is increased every month by a small interest paid by the first winners. The advantage of these societies consists in obtaining a considerable sum at once for small ones paid at intervals. As the government does not interfere with them in any way whatever, their rules vary at the pleasure of the members; but there are two conditions that appear to be invariable—namely, that the founder of the society has a first lot, and that a member who once fails to pay his contribution forfeits his advances to the chief, who is answerable for all; but this is a case of very rare occurrence. All the members make it a great point of honour to be faithful to these engagements, and a failure in them is sure to cover a man with the contempt of his fellow-citizens. If any one finds himself pressed for money, he easily obtains the advantage of having the next lot given to him; and if he cannot go on any longer, he yields his advances to another, who becomes answerable for him. These socie-

ties are so much the fashion, that almost all the Chinese belong to one or other; farmers, artizans, small tradesmen, are thus all collected in groups, and hold their resources in common. A Chinese never lives in isolation, but it is especially in matters of interest and commerce that his associative spirit is remarkable.

The immense population of China, the richness of its soil, the variety of its products, the vast extent of its territory, and the facility of communication by land and water, the activity of its inhabitants, its laws and public usages, all unite to render this nation the most commercial in the world.

On whichever side a stranger enters China, whatever point may first meet his eye, he is sure to be struck, above all else, by the prodigious bustle and movement going on everywhere under the stimulus of the thirst of gain, and the desire of traffic by which this people is incessantly tormented. From north to south, from east to west, the whole country is like a perpetual fair, and a fair that lasts the whole year without any interruption.

And yet, when one has not penetrated to the centre of the Empire, when one has not seen the great towns, Han-yang, Ou-tchang-fou, and Han-keou, facing one another, it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the amount of the internal trade.

Han-keou especially, "The Mouth of Commercial Marts," must be visited, for it is one great shop; and every production has its street or quarter particularly devoted to it. In all parts of the city you meet with a concourse of passengers, often pressed so compactly together, that you have the greatest difficulty to make your way through them. Long lines of porters stretch through

every street; and, as they proceed with a peculiar gymnastic step, they utter a measured monotonous cry, whose sharp sound is heard above all the clamours of the multitude. In the midst of this crowded vortex of men, there prevails, nevertheless, a very fair amount of order and tranquillity; there are few quarrels, much less fights, although the police is far from being as numerous as in most of our cities in Europe. The Chinese are always restrained by a salutary fear of compromising themselves that acts like an instinct; and though they are easily excited, and induced to vociferate, they are soon quiet again, and things return to their usual course.

In seeing the streets thus constantly thronged with people, you might be apt to think that all the inhabitants of the town must be out, and the houses empty. But just cast a glance into the shops, and you will see they are crowded with buyers and sellers. The factories also contain a considerable number of workmen and artizans; and if to these you add the old men, women, and children, you will not be surprised to hear the population of Han-keou, Han-yang, and Ou-tchang-fou, taken together, estimated at eight millions. We do not know whether the inhabitants of the boats are included in this calculation, but the great port of Han-keou is literally a forest of masts, and it is quite astonishing to see vessels of such a size, in such numbers, in the very middle of China.

We have said that Han-keou is in some measure the general mart for the eighteen provinces, since it is there the goods arrive, and thence depart, which are intended to supply all the internal trade. Perhaps the world could not show a town more favourably situated, and possessing a greater number of natural advantages.

Placed in the very centre of the Empire, it is in some measure surrounded by the Blue River, and brought into direct communication with the provinces of the east and the west. This same river, on leaving Han-keou, describes two curves, to the right and left, and bears the great trading junks towards the south as far as the bosom of the lakes Pou-yang and Thoung-ting, which are like two inland seas. An immense number of rivers, which fall into these two lakes, receive in small boats the merchandise brought from Han-keou, and distribute it through all the provinces of the south. Towards the north the natural communications are less easy, but gigantic and ingenious labours have come to the aid of nature, in the numerous artificial canals with which the north of China is intersected, and which, by marvellous and skilful contrivances, establish a communication between all the lakes and navigable rivers of the Empire, so that you might traverse its entire extent without ever getting out of your boat.

The Annals of China show that at every period each successive dynasty has paid great attention to the canal system; but no other work is comparable to that which was executed by the Emperor Yang-ti, of the dynasty of Tsin, who ascended the throne in the year 605 of the Christian era.

In the first year of his reign he dug many new canals, and enlarged the old ones, so that vessels could pass from the Hoang-Ho to the Yang-tse-kiang, and from these great rivers to the principal smaller ones. A learned man named Siao-hoai, presented to him a plan for rendering all the rivers navigable throughout their entire course, and making them communicate, one with another, by canals of a new invention. His project was

adopted and executed, and there were consequently made, remade, and repaired, more than four thousand eight hundred miles of canals. This great enterprise of course required a vast amount of labour, which was divided between the soldiers and the people. Every family was required to furnish one man, between the ages of fifteen and fifty, to whom the Government gave nothing but his food. The soldiers, who had to do the most painful part of the work, received a small increase of pay. Some of these canals were lined with freestone throughout their entire length, and during our various journeys we saw remains enough to attest the beauty of the works. That which ran from the northern to the southern court* was forty feet wide, and had on its banks plantations of elm and willow. That from the eastern to the western court, was less magnificent, but also bordered with a double line of trees.

Chinese historians have branded the memory of the Emperor Yang-ti, because during his reign he never ceased to oppress the people by these *corvees*, to satisfy his own caprice, and his taste for luxury, but they acknowledged that he deserved well of the Empire for the benefits conferred by his canals on the internal trade.

The wealth of China, its system of canals, and the other causes already assigned, have doubtless contributed much to develope in the country the prodigious commercial activity that has been remarked in it at all epochs; but it must be acknowledged also that the character and genius of its inhabitants has always disposed them to traffic. The Chinese has a passionate

* There were at this time four imperial courts.

love of lucre; he is fond of all kinds of speculation and stock-jobbing, and his mind, full of finesse and cunning, takes delight in combining and calculating the chances of a commercial operation.

The Chinese, *par excellence*, is a man installed behind the counter of a shop, waiting for his customers with patience and resignation, and in the intervals of their arrival pondering in his head, and casting up on his little arithmetical machine, the means of increasing his fortune. Whatever may be the nature and importance of his business, he neglects not the smallest profit; the least gain is always welcome, and he accepts it eagerly; greatest of all is his enjoyment, when in the evening, having well closed and barricaded his shop, he can retire into some corner, and there count up religiously the number of his sapecks, and reckon the earnings of the day. The Chinese is born with this taste for traffic, which grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength. The first thing a child longs for is a sapeck; the first use that it makes of its speech and intelligence is to learn to articulate the names of coins; when his little fingers are strong enough to hold the pencil, it is with making figures that he amuses himself, and as soon as the tiny creature can speak and walk, he is capable of buying and selling. In China you need never fear sending a child to make a purchase; you may rely on it, he will not allow himself to be cheated. Even the plays to which the little Chinese are addicted are always impregnated with this mercantile spirit; they amuse themselves with keeping shop, and opening little pawnbroking establishments, and familiarise themselves thus with the jargon, the tricks, and the frauds of tradesmen. Their knowledge in all that relates to

commerce is so clear and precocious, that you need not hesitate to confide to them the most important affairs, and to give them serious business of this kind to manage at an age when children are mostly occupied with their playthings.

The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire enjoy the not unmerited reputation of being very artful and knowing, and such a character will of course play a great part in mercantile affairs. Volumes might be written on the frauds, more or less ingenious and audacious, of the Chinese merchants; and the habit of trickery is so general, the fashion so universal, that no one is offended at it; it is simply a mode of showing that you are clever and *wide awake*. A tradesman is often quite proud when he can tell a story of some successful piece of knavery. It is only just to observe, however, that this want of probity and good faith is chiefly found among the petty traders; the great commercial houses are, on the contrary, most remarkable for the uprightness and integrity of their dealings, and their scrupulous fidelity to their engagements. European merchants who have had commercial transactions with China, are unanimous in extolling the irreproachable probity of their conduct, and it is painful to add that we fear they could not always return the compliment.

The only legal coinage existing in China is a little round piece made of a mixture of copper and pewter, and called by the Chinese *tsien*, and by the Europeans sapecks. They are pierced through the middle with a square hole in order that they may easily be passed on a thread. A string of a thousand of these pieces is equivalent usually to a Chinese ounce of silver: gold and silver are never coined in China; when employed

for larger purchases than can be paid for in sapecks, they are weighed like any other commodity; sapecks are used for all small transactions, and agreements are also made in strings of sapecks.

The Chinese in the towns generally carry with them little scales for buying and selling, and weigh all the money they give or receive. Bank notes, payable to the bearer, are in use throughout the whole Empire; they are issued by the great houses of business, and accepted in all the principal towns.

The value of a sapeck is about half a French centime; and this small coinage is an incalculable advantage to small dealings. Thanks to the sapeck, one may traffic in China on very small means. One may buy a slice of pear, a dozen of fried beans, a few melon seeds, or one walnut, or one may also drink a cup of tea, or smoke some pipes for a sapeck; and a citizen who is not rich enough to afford himself a whole orange will often purchase a half. This extreme division of Chinese coinage has given birth to an infinity of small occupations that afford a subsistence to thousands of persons. With a capital of two hundred sapecks (ten pence English), a Chinese will not hesitate to commence some mercantile speculation. The sapeck is especially an immense resource for those who are asking alms, for a man must be poor indeed not to be able to give a beggar a sapeck.

CHAP. V.

ATTEMPT TO SEE THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE. — WE FORCE THE GUARD OF HIS PALACE. — THE GOVERNOR OF HOU-PÉ. — CONVERSATION WITH THIS EXALTED PERSONAGE. — GOOD RESULT OF THE VISIT. — MOVING. — COURTESY OF A COOK. — ADIEUS OF MASTER TING, AND THE SSE-TCHOUEN ESCORT. — THE MANDARIN LIEOU, OR THE “WEeping WILLOW,” CHIEF OF THE NEW ESCORT. — CHINESE ARCHITECTURE. — TOWERS. — PAGODAS. — FINE ARTS. — RELIGION. — DOCTRINE OF THE LITERARY CLASS. — GREAT HONOURS RENDERED TO CONFUCIUS. — DOCTORS OF REASON. — LIFE AND OPINIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHER LAO-TZE. — BUDDHISM. — LEGEND OF BUDDHA. — DOGMAS AND MORAL PRECEPTS. — BUDDHISTS PERSECUTED BY THE BRAHMINS. — CAUSES OF THESE PERSECUTIONS. — DISPERSION OF THE BUDDHISTS THROUGH THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF ASIA.

WE said at the commencement of the preceding chapter, that on our arrival at Ou-tchang-fou, we were confined in a narrow cell of a pagoda, where we ran considerable risk of being suffocated. We had hoped that when the high functionaries of the place had themselves seen this murderous hole, they would understand that we could not live without air, and would perhaps themselves have procured us another lodging till the day of our departure. These hopes, however, did not seem very likely to be realised. The magistrates of the capital took not the slightest notice of us; and, with the exception of some petty officials, no creature came to visit us.

This treatment was certainly rather wounding to our vanity, but we might perhaps have been able to support the trial, would they only have afforded us space to

move in and air to breathe. To be forsaken by our beloved and amiable Mandarins was distressing, but it could be borne ; but to be dropt into a hole and forgotten, that we could not put up with. For two days we remained in this ignominious position, and then we resolved to make a vigorous effort to get out of it, and endeavour to resume the influence we had lost by our own fault. After having put on our dress of ceremony, we sent for some palanquin bearers, and commanded them to conduct us to the Governor of the Province. They looked at us in a hesitating manner, but we paid them in advance, promising them at the same time something handsome on our return, and then they set off with enthusiasm.

We crossed the square, where the venerable Perboyre had been strangled, and arrived at the tribunal where he had been so cruelly tortured, and where sentence of death had been pronounced against him.

We alighted from our palanquins at the entrance of the palace, and so far our enterprise had not been very difficult. We crossed the threshold, determined to bear down all obstacles that should intervene to prevent our approach to the Governor. We had scarcely reached the middle of the courtyard before we were surrounded by a crowd of satellites and attendants, such as usually throng the avenues to the great tribunals, but their sinister hang-dog physiognomies, with which we had been long familiarised, did not alarm us much. We marched on boldly, affecting not to hear the thousand remarks that were made around us, on the subject of our yellow caps and red girdles.

At the moment when we were about to cross a hall to enter a second court, we were accosted by a little

Mandarin with a gilt ball, who seemed to be acting as a sort of usher to introduce guests. He appeared quite aghast at our abrupt entrance, and placing himself in our way, he asked three times running where we were going, extending at the same time his two arms in a horizontal position, as if to bar our passage.

"We are going to his Excellency the Governor," we replied.

"His Excellency the Governor is not there. You can't see the Governor. Do the Rites permit people to push in in that way to the first magistrate of the province?" and as he spoke he stamped about and gesticulated, and with his arms extended followed every one of our movements, jumping alternately to the right and the left to prevent us from passing. We walked on, nevertheless, without saying a word, and thus forced our introducer to walk backwards. As we reached the end of the hall he turned suddenly, and threw himself upon the two leaves of the folding door, as if to shut them; but seizing him by the arm, we cried out in the most imperious tone we could muster, "Woe to you if you do not leave that door open. If you stop us for a single moment, you are a lost man."

These words inspired a salutary fear; he opened the door again, and we entered the second court, leaving the little man gazing after us in open-mouthed astonishment.

We reached the Governor's apartments without any new obstacle. In the ante-chamber were four superior Mandarins, who, when we entered, seemed to doubt whether we were not ghosts. They gazed at us and at one another without speaking a word, and as if consulting each other as to what was to be done in these unex-

pected circumstances. At length one of them ventured to ask who we were. "We are Frenchmen," we replied; "we have been at Peking, thence from Peking to Lha-ssa, in Thibet; and we wish to speak with his Excellency the Governor."

"But is his Excellency the Governor informed of your arrival at Ou-tchang-fou? Has your visit been announced to him?"

"A dispatch from the Emperor ought to have informed him of our coming to Hou-pé." We remarked that the words "dispatch from the Emperor" had an effect on the Mandarins. The speaker, after fixing upon us for a moment an inquisitive look, disappeared through a little door. We suspected that he had gone to the Governor to announce to him the curious discovery he had just made; and he was not long before he returned.

"The Governor is absent," said he, in a perfectly easy manner, just as if he had not been telling a lie; "the Governor is absent. When he returns he will send for you, if he has any thing to say to you. Now go back to your lodgings."

"Who is it who desires us to go away? Who told you to say the Governor would send for us? Why do you seek to deceive us by pronouncing words contrary to the truth? The Governor is here; you have just spoken with him, and we will not go away till we have seen him." As we said this, we quietly seated ourselves on a broad divan that occupied a great part of the room. The Mandarins astonished at our doings made their exit altogether, and left us alone.

At Han-yang, as we have said, we had betrayed much weakness, and it was now necessary to repair this fault, if we wished to reach Canton in safety, instead of perishing

in misery on the road. The benevolence of the Viceroy of Sse-tehouen could not avail us farther than Ouchang-fou; the Governor of Hou-pé would now have the disposal of us as far as the capital of Kiang-si, and it was absolutely necessary that we should speak with him, in order not to be abandoned entirely to the voracity of the petty Mandarins. We were left alone for a long time, so that we had full leisure to arrange the plan we intended to follow.

At length an aged attendant appeared, who after having in a manner *applied* his face to ours, in order to take a good observation of them, said in a tremulous voice, that "His Excellency the Governor invited our illustrious persons to come to him." From this polite formula, we thought it might not be difficult to recover our position, and we immediately followed the attendant into a magnificent saloon, where, amidst a crowd of Chinese articles of luxury, we noticed a French clock and two beautiful vases of Sevres china, as well as some apparently English pictures on the walls. The rich Chinese are very fond of decorating their apartments with articles of European manufacture; not that they have any great value in their eyes as works of art, but they come from a great distance from beyond the Western Seas, and that is enough.

In that matter, Chinese and Europeans are pretty much alike. Who does not like to have in his drawing-room some ugly figure of bronze or porcelain which he can show has really come from China?

We were engaged in admiring the Sevres vases, and noticing with feelings of gratified vanity how greatly superior they were to the porcelain from the Chinese factories, when the Governor entered. He crossed the

saloon swinging his arms, and looking neither to the right nor the left; and then went and sat down near a flower-stand in a large lacquered arm-chair, the back of which was covered with red cloth embroidered with silk. We saluted him respectfully, and then waited till he should address us. This personage did not appear to possess the kindness and simplicity of the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen. He was about fifty years of age, and his thin dark face had a severe and hard expression.

“Your illustrious country,” said he, “is the kingdom of France; is it long since you left it?”

“Yes; several years.”

“You have doubtless some affair to communicate to me, since you have come to see me.”

“First, we wished to fulfil a duty of politeness.”

“Ah! I am ashamed ——.”

“Then we desired to know whether the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen had forwarded a dispatch to announce our arrival at Ou-tchang-fou.”

“Certainly, it arrived a long time ago; the couriers who carry dispatches travel rapidly.”

“Oh! From the manner in which we have been treated here, we thought the dispatch had not yet arrived. The Emperor gave orders to the Viceroy Pao-hing to have us conducted to Canton with all possible respect; and during our residence at Tching-tou-fou we had reason to speak in high praise of the treatment we received from the authorities. The illustrious and venerable Pao-hing, with whom we had several interviews, paid us the greatest attention; and all along the road both great and little Mandarins have respected

the orders he gave concerning us, and we have travelled in the most convenient and honourable manner."

"That is the custom of our country," said the Governor, haughtily; "strangers are well treated among us."

"It appears, however," we replied, "that this custom is not general; perhaps it depends on the Governors of the provinces. The Book of Rites is the same for the whole Empire, but it would seem to be interpreted in a different manner in Hou-pé to what it is in Sse-tchouen. At Han-yang, on the other side of the river, we should have died of hunger if we had not had money with us to go and buy food for ourselves at an inn. Here in the capital itself, during the two days we have been here, no one has taken the slightest notice of us, and we have been shut up in a cell where we had hardly room to turn round. Did the Emperor, perhaps, give orders that we should be made to expiate at Hou-pé the good treatment we had received at Sse-tchouen?"

"What words are you speaking? The mercy of the Emperor extends over all places. Where are you lodged?"

"The Viceroy of Sse-tchouen never asked us where we were lodged; he knew, because it was he himself who assigned us our lodging. When we arrived in this city we were conducted into a narrow chamber, into which scarcely any air can penetrate, and we have been there two days without seeing any one to whom we could complain. It is probably desired that our journey should end at Ou-tchang-fou."

The Governor fairly shook in his chair with anger; he declared we were calumniating the character of his

nation; his sharp voice became more and more piercing, and he began to talk with so much volubility and animation, that at last we could no longer understand what he was saying. We took good care, however, not to interrupt him, but stood before him calm and motionless, waiting till he should become more pacified and hold his tongue. When the time came, we said to him, in a very low tone, but with a certain cold and concentrated energy, "Your Excellency, we are not in the habit of pronouncing rude and injurious words; it is not right to assume bad intentions in our brethren; nevertheless, we are missionaries of the Lord of Heaven; we are Frenchmen, and we cannot forget that this town is called Ou-tchang-fou."

"What is the meaning of these words? I do not comprehend them."

"We cannot forget that one of our brothers, a missionary, a Frenchman, was strangled here at Ou-tchang-fou, twenty-three years ago; and that another of our brothers, also a missionary and a Frenchman, was put to death here, not quite six years ago."

On hearing these words the Governor changed countenance, and it was evident he was greatly agitated.

"This very day," we continued, "in coming here, we crossed the square upon which our brothers were executed. Can it then be surprising if we feel some uneasiness, if we fear that some attempt may be made upon our lives, especially when we have been lodged almost in a sepulchre?"

"I don't know what you mean; I know nothing about these affairs," replied the Governor, hastily; "at the periods of which you speak I was not in the province."

“We are aware of that; the Governor who was here six years ago, as soon as he had given the order to have the French missionary strangled, was degraded by the Emperor, and condemned to perpetual exile. It was evident to the whole Empire that Heaven had avenged the innocent blood. No one, however, need answer for more than his own actions. But whose fault is it that we are now being treated in the manner we have described? We have studied the writings of the philosopher Meng-tse, and we have read in them this: ‘Meng-tse one day asked the king of Leang whether he thought there was any difference between killing a man with a sword and killing him with ill-treatment, and the king of Leang replied, I do not think there is any difference.’”

The Governor appeared very much astonished to hear us quote a passage from the classical books. He endeavoured to throw a little more gentleness into his physiognomy and manners, and he thought proper to reassure us concerning the fears we had expressed for our personal safety. He said that the Mandarins had executed his orders badly, that he would have a severe inquiry into the matter, and that every body’s sins should be punished, since he was determined to have respect paid to the will of the Emperor, whose heart was filled with quite paternal kindness for strangers, as we had ourselves experienced in the treatment we had received at Sse-tchouen, and all along the road. He added that we should be equally well treated at Hou-pé, that we must not believe those stories of two of our countrymen having been put to death in past times. Those were merely idle and false reports invented by

low people, whose tongues were always active, and given to lying.

We did not think it necessary to insist upon the point, and prove to him that the martyrdom of MM. Clet and Perboyre was something very different from an idle rumour; we contented ourselves with observing that it was always known in France in what manner Frenchmen were treated in foreign countries, that our government might appear sometimes not to notice it, but that it would not fail to remember it in due time. Altogether we flattered ourselves that we had produced some impression on the Governor, and that our visit would have a good result. Before leaving the apartment, therefore, we endeavoured to relax a little of the constraint of the situation by giving his Excellency some information about our long journey and Europe, which was to him almost an unknown world. At length we performed the salutations required by the Rites, and took our departure.

In crossing the hall, and descending the numerous steps of the tribunal, we could easily see that the success of our visit was already known. We were courteously saluted by all whom we met, and when we reached the first court, the introducer of guests, who had displayed so much zeal in barring our passage, hastened to meet us, and conduct us to our palanquins, with every appearance of the most cordial and profound devotion. Our bearers, whom we found waiting for us at the door with the palanquin, then took us on their shoulders, and bore us at a rapid pace back to our abode.

We had only been a few hours in this abominable cell when the tam-tam was heard sounding at the door of the little pagoda, and a Mandarin, accompanied by a

numerous suite of attendants, presented himself, demanding to speak with the illustrious natives of the kingdom of France. As soon as he saw us he hastened to announce that he was charged by his Excellency the Governor to conduct us to a more suitable and more convenient lodging, one that should be more conformable to the laws of hospitality.

“When shall we go?” we asked.

“Whenever you please; probably everything is ready, for the orders were given as soon as you quitted the Governor’s palace.”

“Let us go immediately then,” said we; “it is late, and we should be glad to rise again out of this tomb.”

“Yes, that’s it,” cried Master Ting, who was not more satisfied than we were with this wretched little dwelling, where he was obliged to keep himself huddled up while he smoked his opium, because there was not room for him to stretch himself out; “that’s it, let us rise again out of this tomb.” We then packed up our goods with all possible haste, and gladly turned our backs on the detestable den.

We were conducted to the other extremity of the town, almost into the country, and were there installed in a vast and handsome establishment, half civil and half religious. It was a rich Buddhist convent, surrounded by numerous apartments destined to receive Mandarins of distinction on their arrival at Ou-tchang-fou. There were gardens, courts planted with lofty forest trees, belvederes, and terraces on peristyles, which gave an air of pomp and grandeur to the place that contrasted strikingly with the mean little pagoda we had just left; but what we prized above all else was the sweet fresh air of the country that we drew in in long breaths.

As soon as we were settled in our dwelling, the Mandarin who had brought us here sent for the cook of the establishment, and he arrived quickly with a pencil between his teeth, a sheet of paper in one hand, and an inkstand in the other, and placing himself at the end of the table, rubbed a little ink upon a slab, and begged us to mention the names of the dishes we preferred.

“It is a fact known to all the world,” said the Mandarin, “that the Western nations do not feed in the same manner as the inhabitants of the Central Kingdom, and as far as possible we must comply with people’s usages and customs.” We thanked the Mandarin for his polite attention, but said we had now for a long time been in the habit of living quite in the Chinese manner. The “Superintendent of the Cauldron” need only follow the inspirations of his own talents, and all would be well. A list of dishes would be quite superfluous. We should have found it, indeed, very hard to make one; for, during all these years we had had to accustom ourselves to so many kinds of cookery, and had eaten of so many odd things, that we were now hardly capable of appreciating culinary skill, and our ideas on the subject of dishes had become extremely vague and confused. Everything that had not the taste of barley flour, flavoured with suet, was acceptable to us.

The head cook gathered up his writing materials, and took his departure, quite proud and elated at the mark of confidence we had shown him, and of which, we may add, he proved himself thoroughly worthy. The skill with which he compounded for us a number of Chinese ragouts, each better than the last, was such as to show that we could not have done better than confide entirely in his genius and discretion.

The day after our moving into this new habitation, Master Ting, accompanied by his colleague, the military Mandarin, and the numerous soldiers and attendants who had escorted us since our departure from the capital of Sse-tchouen, came in a body, and with a certain air of solemnity, to our apartments, to bid us farewell. Having been charged only to conduct us to Ou-tchang-fou, their mission was now ended, and they were about to return to their own country.

We had travelled in company by land and water now for the space of two months; we had gradually become accustomed to live together; we had shared in the good and the bad times on the road; and it was not without a kind of emotion that we now saw the moment arrive that was to separate us for ever. Our regrets were certainly not as lively and profound as those we had experienced in bidding adieu to our Thibetan escort. We had no friendly ties to sever, but merely a certain habit of being together, which is easily acquired during long and toilsome journeys, and which it is disagreeable to break off in order to form new ones. Master Ting had provoked us more than once, and we had often quarrelled; yet, on the whole, we had become tolerably good friends. At bottom he was not a bad fellow, for a Mandarin; and if one only let him play the Chinese a little, that is to say, finger the sapecks right and left all along the road, he was tolerably good-humoured and amiable.

Our farewells were extremely verbose, but instead of weeping, we laughed a great deal as we recollected many curious incidents of the journey. We afterwards showed him a piece of politeness, *à la Chinoise*, by inquiring whether, in a pecuniary point of view, he had reason to

be satisfied with having accompanied us, and had made a pretty round sum by it.

“Why, yes,” he said, rubbing his hands, “the business has been pretty good; I have got together a nice little lot of ingots; but you know, of course, it was not for the sake of money that I wished to accompany you.”

“Oh, of course not; who could think that?”

“It is evident that I don't like money; I never did; but I should like to offer a little present to my mother on my return. It is for her sake I wish to make some profit.”

“That is, Master Ting, a fine and noble feeling. In loving money, then, you only practise filial piety?”

“Exactly; filial piety is the very foundation of the social relations; it ought to be the prime motive of all our actions.” And Master Ting took his leave, wishing that the star of happiness might shine on our route all the way to Canton.

He went off quite delighted with the idea of having persuaded us that he had been induced by pure filial piety to fleece the Mandarins, all along the road from the capital of Sse-tchouen to Ou-tchang-fou.

The only one of our Sse-tchouen escort who did not leave us here was the servant, Wei-chan, whom the Viceroy, Pao-hing, had engaged for us. This young man had acquitted himself of his duty with intelligence and activity, and even appeared to have formed a kind of attachment to us—at least, as far as we could possibly expect from a Chinese servant. He had been, like the rest, appointed to attend us only to Ou-tchang-fou; but the evening before the departure of his companions, he had come to express a desire to remain with us till we reached Canton. His proposal not only met with no objection on our part, but was even eagerly accepted,

though we did not think it prudent to express all our satisfaction to him. He had by this time become perfectly acquainted with our habits, and knew, as the Chinese say, "the taste of our characters;" and it was much more agreeable to us to have to do with a man to whom we were already accustomed, and who suited us tolerably well, than with a stranger. Wei-chan could also be of great service to us with the new escort that we were to take at Ou-tchang-fou. The one that was leaving us, and which in the latter part of our journey had behaved extremely well, had, including its chief, Master Ting, cost us an immensity of trouble to bring into such good order. We had spent so much pains upon it, that the idea of having all our work to do over again was rather disheartening. Now we calculated that the presence of Wei-chan would save us the trouble of undertaking another course of education for our future travelling companions; he would serve as a good example to the rest, and continue all our good traditions. It was, therefore, decided that he should accompany us to Canton.

After the departure of our Sse-tchouen escort, the Mandarin who had conducted us to our new abode came to pay us a visit of ceremony, and to announce to us that he had been appointed by his Excellency the Governor to conduct us to Nan-tchang-fou, the capital of Kiang-si. He begged us afterwards to give him our opinion on the propriety of the Governor's choice of him for an affair of so much importance. There were not two ways to answer such a question in China, so we replied, that in such a choice the Governor had proved most indisputably his possession of the rare gift of discernment into the characters of men, and that also his

Excellency had shown no less clearly his desire to render our journey fortunate and agreeable. Before our departure we would not fail to go and thank him for this signal mark of his solicitude and benevolence. Our new conductor made in return for our courtesy the humblest speeches, and assured us that he had never before met with men whose hearts were so capacious and so merciful.

When this performance was over we tried to have a little rational conversation. We learned that our Mandarin was forty years of age, that he was called *Lieou*, that is "The Willow;" that he belonged to the literary class, but had only attained a low grade; that he had formerly had the government of a small district, but that he was at present out of office.

By his language it was easy to see that he was a native of the North, from the province of Ching; namely, the country of Confucius, which by no means implies that his intelligence was of a very high order. More grave and somewhat more dignified than Master Ting, he was also more reserved, and not so amusing; it was besides not very agreeable to talk with him, as he expressed himself with extreme difficulty. In his ordinary moods he slipped his words together, so that we understood him very imperfectly, and when he became at all excited his talk got into such confusion, such an inextricable imbroglio, that we understood nothing at all. His physiognomy was very unmeaning; there remained to him only a few fragments of his teeth, and his goggle eyes that were seen bolting out behind the glasses of his spectacles had the infirmity of frequently shedding tears; so that when he found his name was "Willow," we could not help

adding an epithet, and calling him "The Weeping Willow."

It was agreed between us that the new escort should be organised as quickly as possible, and so as to be ready for us to set off again in four days.

The visit that we had had the audacity to make to the Governor of Hou-pé had produced two good effects. First, we had recovered our lost influence; and secondly, we had obtained an excellent lodging, where, while we were waiting the arrangements for our departure, we might recover from the fatigues of our journey and also find around us many amusements. Besides the company of the Mandarins who resided in the same establishment, we had from time to time that of the principal functionaries of the town, who did not fail to come and pay their respects to us, as soon as they learned that we were in favour with the Governor. We could also enjoy, without going out, the pleasure of walking in the courtyards shaded by large trees, or in the immense garden, where—though it was not so ornamental and elegant as that of Sse-ma-kouang—there was a pretty belvedere, and the most capricious winding paths imaginable.

Sometimes we went to visit the Buddhist temple, situated at the centre of the establishment, and endeavoured to make out the meaning of the enigmatical sentences with which the walls were adorned.

We could not exactly understand what this building was; there were wings devoted to the service of travelling Mandarins; there were vast saloons destined for literary meetings, and assemblies of several other corporations; there was an observatory, and a theatre, and a pagoda; and all this went by the name of Si-men-

yuen, Garden of the Western Gate. You often find in the large towns of China these unaccountable establishments, devoted to a variety of purposes. Their construction is very difficult to describe; you can only say it is quite Chinese. The public edifices, temples, houses, towns, of the Celestial Empire, have all a certain character peculiar to them which does not belong to any known order of architecture; one might call it the Chinese style; but no one could have an exact idea of it without having been in China.

The towns are almost all built on the same plan; they are usually of the quadrilateral form, and surrounded by high walls, flanked with towers at certain distances, and sometimes also by ditches, wet or dry. In books which speak of China, it is said that the streets of the towns are broad and perfectly straight, but it is not less true that others are narrow and tortuous, especially in the cities of the south. We have seen here and there some exceptions, but they are extremely rare. The houses in town as well as in the country are low, and have seldom more than one story. Those of the first class are built of brick or painted wood, varnished on the outside, and roofed with grey tiles; the second are of wood or clay, with thatched roofs. The buildings of the north are always inferior to those of the south, especially in the villages. In the houses of the rich there are usually several courts, one behind another, and in the last are the apartments of the women and the gardens. A southern aspect is always preferred. The whole of one side of the apartments is usually occupied by windows, in which either talc painted in various designs, a sort of transparent shell, or white and coloured paper, is used instead of glass. The edges of the roof

are turned up to form a gutter, and the corners decorated with dragons and other fabulous animals. The shops are supported by pilasters, ornamented with inscriptions on painted and varnished boards, and the mixture of colours produces from a distance a very agreeable effect. Very few private houses can be called magnificent, though the term may be applied to some public edifices. At Peking the government offices and the palaces of the princes are raised on a basement, and covered with varnished tiles ; but the most remarkable monuments are the bridges, towers, and pagodas. The bridges are very numerous, and we have seen some stone ones, composed of arches of great strength and span, that were very handsome and imposing in appearance. At a short distance from the towns of the first, second, and third order, you almost always see a more or less lofty tower standing apart and solitary like a colossal sentinel. According to Indian tradition, when Buddha died, his body was burnt, and his bones divided into eight parts, which were inclosed in so many urns, to be deposited in towers of eight floors.

Thence originate, it is said, these towers, so common in China, and in all the countries into which Buddhism has penetrated. The number of these floors is nevertheless uncertain, and their form is also very variable. There are some round, some square, some hexagonal or octagonal, and they are built of wood, of brick, even of earthenware, like that of Nankin, the ornaments of which being of porcelain have procured for it the name of the porcelain tower. Most of these monuments, however, are now falling into ruins, but in the ancient poems are found passages which attest the luxury and magnificence formerly displayed by the Emperors in their

construction. "When I raise my eyes towards the tower of stone I must seek its top in the clouds. The sheen of its bricks glitters with gold and purple, and reflects, like a rainbow, the rays of the sun." A censor to express energetically the inutility and enormous expense of the famous tower of Tchang-ngan calls it "the half of a city." A poet, in rather a satirical vein, in speaking of one of these edifices which was five hundred feet high, after several strophes expressive of astonishment and admiration at the project and execution of so great a work continues: — "I am in fear of asthma, and I have not dared to ascend to the highest terrace, whence men below appear like ants. To mount so many steps as that is only for those young loins, that have the strength to carry in their hands or on their heads the revenues of several provinces." There were formerly, according to the Chinese books, towers of white marble, of gilt brick, and even of copper; at all events in part. They had three, five, seven, nine, even thirteen floors, and their outward form varied as much as their internal decoration. There were some that had galleries or balconies diminishing in width at each floor; some were built in the midst of the waters, some on an enormous mass of steep rocks, upon which, nevertheless, trees and flowers were made to grow, and where you saw cascades and waterfalls. The ascent to the platform on which they were built was by a set of steps roughly cut, and winding round the sides of the rock, or even through it by vaults and caverns imitated from those of mountains, and suspended like them over precipices.

When you reached the platform you found, as it were, enchanted gardens; and from the midst of these rose the

towers which must have been of extraordinary beauty, to judge from the remains still existing.

The pagodas or idol temples are scattered all over China with incredible profusion ; there is no village that does not possess several of them, and they are seen on all the roads, and even in the fields. The city of Peking, it is said, possesses ten thousand of them. It must be added that the greater part of these pagodas do not differ much from other buildings. Very often they are only like small chapels, in which there are niches with idols in them, and vases with burning perfume.

There are, nevertheless, some that exhibit a richness, grandeur, and beauty, worthy of much admiration, such, for instance, as the Temples of Heaven and Earth at Peking, and in the provinces several celebrated pagodas, to which the Chinese make pilgrimages at certain times of the year.

The ornaments and decorations of these temples are, as may be supposed, quite in the Chinese taste — and full of caprice and confusion — and the paintings and sculptures have little artistic merit, as the arts of design are very imperfectly cultivated in China. The painters only excel in certain mechanical processes relating to the preparation and application of colours ; in their compositions they pay no attention whatever to perspective, and their landscapes are most distressingly monotonous. Their best performances are in miniatures and water colours, but though not devoid of a certain kind of beauty, they are still very inferior in style to the most mediocre of European paintings. The sculptures in the pagodas have often merit in the details, but want both elegance and correctness of form. The

Chinese assert that the painters and sculptors of former times, especially of the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, were greatly superior to those of the present day; and one may be tempted to subscribe to that opinion after having visited the old curiosity shops, where you find articles of real merit.

Temples of any great antiquity are not found in China, as they have seldom been built strongly enough to resist the ravages of time, or wilful injury; when they decay they are usually left to go to ruin as they may, and new ones built. The *Song* dynasty, says a Chinese proverb, made the roads and the bridges, the *Tang* the towers, the *Ming* the pagodas.

We may add that the present dynasty, the Tsing, have made nothing, and do not even try to preserve what has been made by others. In considering the prodigious number of the temples, pagodas, and oratories, which rise in all parts of China, one might be tempted to think the Chinese a very religious people, but on looking closely at the matter, it is easy to see that these external manifestations are only the result of old customs, and no indication at all of pious feelings and ideas. The Chinese of the present day are, as we have already said, entirely absorbed in material interests and the enjoyments of the present life, and totally indifferent to religion in every form.

Their annals attest, nevertheless, that at various epochs they have been deeply interested in certain religious systems, which, after many vicissitudes, have at length become acclimatised in the Empire, and still exist there, at all events nominally.

There can hardly be said to be any such thing as a state religion in China, but all religions are tolerated,

provided, at least, they are not regarded as politically dangerous. Three principal religions are admitted and considered as equally good—one might say equally true—although there have been long and bitter wars between them. The first and most ancient is that called *jou-kiao*, “The Doctrine of the Lettered,” of which Confucius is regarded as the patriarch and reformer. It is based on a philosophic pantheism, which has been variously interpreted at different epochs. It is believed that in the highest antiquity the existence of an Omnipotent God distributing rewards and punishments was recognised in it; and various passages in the writings of Confucius give room to think that the sage himself acknowledged such a one; but the vague sense in which he has used his words, the little anxiety he has shown to inculcate such a belief on his disciples, and the care he takes to base his ideas of morality* and justice, upon the principles of the love of order and a certain not very well-defined conformity with the will of heaven and the progress of nature, have permitted his followers to err so far, that several of them have fallen into a true Spinozism, and have taught, while referring always

* And what morality! *Tse-hien*, a disciple, asks Confucius how a son ought to bear himself towards the enemy of his father. “Let him lie down in a mourning habit,” replies Confucius, “and have only his weapons for a pillow. Let him accept no employment till the enemy of his father no longer exists upon the earth. Should he meet him, either in the palace or in the market-place, let him not go home to fetch his arms, but attack him on the spot.” In another passage this famous moralist expresses himself thus: “the murderer of your father ought not to remain under the same sky with you; you must not lay by your arms as long as the murderer of your brother still lives, and you cannot live in the same kingdom with that of your friend.”

to the authority of their master, a materialistic system that is degenerating into atheism. Confucius, in fact, is never religious in his writings; he contents himself with recommending in general the observance of the ancient practices of filial piety and fraternal love; and the bringing the conduct into conformity with the laws of heaven, with which human actions ought always to harmonise.

In reality, the religion and the doctrine of Confucius is a system of positivism. Little do the Chinese care about long philosophical lucubrations, little for questions concerning the origin, creation, and end of the world. They ask of time only what may suffice for life; of science and letters only what is required to fill official employments; of the greatest principles only their practical consequences; and of morality nothing but the political and utilitarian part; in a word, they are what at the present day many in Europe are striving to become. They put aside all grand disputes, all speculative questions, to attach themselves to the positive. Their religion itself is only a kind of civilisation, and their philosophy the art of living in peace, of commanding and obeying.

The State has always retained as a civil institution the worship paid to the spirits of heaven and earth, of the stars, the mountains, and the rivers, as well as to the souls of deceased relations; it is an external religion for official personages and literary men who aspire to any office; but no one regards it as anything more than a social institution, the meaning of which may be interpreted in different ways, and from which no consequence need be drawn.

This worship has no priests and no idols; every

magistrate practises it within the sphere of his own jurisdiction; and the Emperor himself is the patriarch or head of it. Generally, all literary persons, and those who propose to become such, attach themselves to it, though often without renouncing practices borrowed from other religions. But conviction does not seem to have anything to do with the matter in either case; and habit alone induces them to conform to ceremonies which they themselves turn into ridicule—such as divination, casting horoscopes, and counting lucky and unlucky days, all which superstitions are in great vogue throughout the Empire.

Whatever is least vague and most serious in the religion of the Chinese is absorbed by the worship of Confucius. His tablet is in all the schools; masters and pupils are required to prostrate themselves before this venerated name, at the beginning and at the end of the classes, and his image is to be found in the academies and the places where the learned assemble, and where literary examinations are carried on. All the towns have temples raised in his honour, and more than three hundred millions of men proclaim him the saint *par excellence*. Never has it been given to any mortal to exercise during so many centuries so extensive an empire over his fellow-creatures, or to receive homage so much like true worship, although every one knows perfectly well that Confucius was simply a mortal man, who lived in the principality of Lan-sin, six centuries before the Christian era.

A worship, at the same time civil and religious, rendered to a simple citizen by an immense nation for four and twenty centuries! There is nothing in human annals comparable to it. The descendants of Confucius, who

exist still in great numbers, participate in the honours paid by the Chinese nation to their glorious ancestor; they constitute the sole hereditary nobility of the Empire, and enjoy certain privileges appertaining to them alone.

The second religion in China is regarded by its professors as the primitive religion of the ancient inhabitants, and it has consequently many analogies with the preceding; only that the individual existence of spirits and demons, independently of the parts of nature over which they preside, is more fully recognised by it. The priests and priestesses of this worship are devoted to celibacy, and practise magic, astrology, necromancy, and many other absurd superstitions. They are called Tao-sse, or Doctors of Reason, because their fundamental dogma taught by the famous Lao-tze, the contemporary of Confucius, is that of the existence of the primordial reason that created the world.

Lao-tze being little known to Europeans, it may not be irrelevant here to enter into some details concerning the life and opinions of this philosopher. We borrow them from an excellent notice of him, published by M. Abel Remusat, in his *Mélanges Asiatiques*.

“I have subjected to a profound examination the doctrines of a philosopher, very celebrated in China, though very little known in Europe, and whose writings, being very obscure, and consequently very little read, are not much better appreciated in his own country than in ours, where his name has hardly been heard.

“The traditions that have been current concerning this philosophy, and for the knowledge of which we are indebted to the missionaries, are not of a nature to invite any serious inquiry. What was most positively

known was, that this sage, whom one of the three sects of China acknowledge as their head, was born 2400 years ago, and wrote a book that has come down to posterity under the pompous title of 'The Book of Reason and Virtue.' From this title, his followers have bestowed on themselves that of 'Doctors of Reason;' and they support their claim to this denomination by a thousand extravagances. It is from them we learn that the mother of their patriarch bore him in her womb nine times nine years, and that he came into the world with grey hair, which procured for him the title of Lao-tze ('Old Child'), under which he is commonly known. It is recorded also that towards the end of his life, this philosopher left China, and travelled very far into the West, to the countries where, according to some, he obtained his opinions, and, according to others, taught them. In searching for the details of his life, I have met with many wonderful things told of him by the ignorant sectaries who suppose they are following his doctrine. For instance, as they admit the dogma of the transmigration of souls, they imagine that of their master not to have been its first birth when it came to animate the body above mentioned, but to have already appeared several times upon the earth. It is known that Pythagoras pretended to have formerly reigned in Phrygia under the name of Midas; that he remembered to have been that Euphorbius who wounded Menelaus, and that he recognised in the temple of Juno at Argos the buckler that he had borne at the siege of Troy. These sorts of genealogies cost nothing to those that fabricate them, but that which has been made for Lao-tze is certainly magnificent. Among other transformations, his soul

had descended many ages before into the western countries, and had converted the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, 600 years before the building of Rome!

“It appears to me that these fables might have relation to the principles inculcated by Lao-tze, and, perhaps, present some traces of the circumstances that carried them to the extremity of Asia. I was interested in inquiring whether this sage, whose life offers so many points of resemblance with the philosopher of Samos, might not have also in his opinions some more real conformity with him. My examination of his book fully confirmed this conjecture, and also effected a complete change in the opinion I had formed of the writer. Like many other founders of religious systems, he was far from foreseeing the direction that the doctrines he taught were to take in future ages, and should he ever appear again upon the earth he would have much cause to complain of the wrong done to him by his unworthy disciples. Instead of the head of a sect of jugglers, magicians, and astrologers, seeking for the elixir of immortality, and the means of reaching heaven by raising themselves through the air, I found in his book a true philosopher, a judicious moralist, an eloquent theologian, and a subtle metaphysician. His style has the majesty of Plato; and we must own also something of his obscurity. He expresses similar conceptions almost in the same language; and the analogy of the expressions is not less striking than that of the ideas. Here, for example, in speaking of the Supreme Being:—‘Before the chaos that preceded the birth of the heavens and the earth, one only being existed—immense, silent, immoveable yet incessantly active—

that is the mother of the universe. I know not how this being is named; but I designate it by the word reason. Man has his model in the earth, the earth in the heavens, the heavens in reason itself.' The morality professed by Lao-tze is worthy of this beginning; according to him perfection consists in being without passion, in order the better to contemplate the harmony of the universe. There is not, he says, any greater sin than ill-regulated desires, nor any greater misfortune than the torments that are the just punishment of them. He did not seek to diffuse his doctrine. 'If one has discovered a treasure,' he says, 'one conceals it carefully.' The most solid virtue of the sage consists in knowing how to pass for a fool. He adds that the wise man should follow the times, and adapt himself to circumstances; a precept that one might think superfluous, but which was doubtless intended to be understood in a sense different from that which it has among us. For the rest, his philosophy breathes nothing but mildness and benevolence. He is averse only to hard-hearted and violent men. Mention has been sometimes made of this passage concerning conquerors: 'The least glorious peace is preferable to the most brilliant successes of war. The most splendid victory is but the light from a conflagration.' 'He who adorns himself with laurels loves blood, and deserves to be blotted out from the number of men.' The ancients said, 'Render no funeral honours to conquerors; receive them with tears and cries, in memory of the homicides they have committed, and let the monuments of their victories be environed with tombs.'

"The metaphysics of Lao-tze offer many remarkable traits that we are constrained to pass over in silence.

How in fact could we give an idea of the high abstractions, the inextricable subtleties, in which his oriental imagination wanders and loses itself. It is sufficient to say that the opinions of the Chinese philosopher on the origin and constitution of the universe present no ridiculous fables or monstrous absurdities; they bear the impress of a noble and elevated mind, and in the sublime reveries that distinguish them they present a striking and indisputable resemblance to the doctrines professed a little later in the schools of Pythagoras and Plato. Like the Pythagoreans and Platonists, our philosopher admits as a first cause Reason — a being ineffable, uncreated, who is the type of the universe, but who has no type but himself. Like Pythagoras, he regards human souls as emanations from this ethereal substance, and supposes that after death they are reunited with it; he also agrees with Plato in refusing to the wicked the faculty of re-entering the bosom of this universal soul. Like Pythagoras, he gives to the first principles of things the names of numbers, and his cosmogony is in some measure algebraical. He attaches the chain of being to him whom he calls *One* — then to *Two* — then to *Three* — who he says have made all things. The divine Plato, who had adopted this mysterious dogma, seems to fear revealing it to the profane; he envelopes it in clouds in his famous letter to three friends; he teaches it to Dionysius of Syracuse, but in enigmas, as he says himself, for fear that his tablets, passing over land and sea, might fall into the hands of some unknown person who should read and understand them.

“Possibly the then recent recollection of the death of Socrates might have contributed to occasion this reserve.

Lao-tze does not employ all this circumlocution, and it is clearly laid down in his book, that it was a threefold being who formed the universe."

This thought confirms all that has been already indicated in the tradition of the journey of Lao-tze towards the West, and leaves little doubt concerning the origin of his doctrine. Probably he received it from the Jews of the Ten Tribes whom the conquests of Salmanasar had just dispersed over Asia; or from the apostles of some Phœnician sect, to which belonged also the philosophers who were the precursors and masters of Pythagoras and Plato. In a word, we find in the writings of this Chinese philosopher the dogmas and opinions which formed, to all appearance, the basis of the Orphic faith and of that antique oriental wisdom which the Greeks sought for in the school of the Egyptians, the Thracians, and the Phœnicians.

It is now certain that Lao-tze drew from the same sources as the masters of ancient philosophy; but one would like to know who were his immediate preceptors, and what countries of the West he visited. We know by a credible witness that he went to Bactria, and it is not impossible that he penetrated as far as Judea, or even Greece. A Chinese at Athens presents indeed an idea that runs counter to our opinions, or rather our prejudices, concerning the relations of ancient nations; but I believe, nevertheless, that we should accustom ourselves to it; and that though it cannot be positively proved that our Chinese philosopher did really reach Greece, it is not improbable that there were Chinese there about that period, and that the Greeks may have alluded to them in those Scythians and Hyperboreans whom they mention as remarkable for the mildness and elegance

of their manners. Besides this, if Lao-tze stopped in Syria, after having traversed Persia, he must already have gone three parts of the way, and overcome the greatest difficulties in the passage across the plateau of high Asia.

Since we have attached ourselves exclusively to the search after facts, we can hardly conceive that any one should undertake such a long and toilsome journey from the sole desire to become acquainted with opinions; but that was the time for philosophic travels, — men were willing to brave every fatigue in the search after wisdom, or what they took for such; and the love of truth had power to stimulate them to enterprises upon which even the love of gain would have hardly ventured. There is an air of romance about these long wanderings, that half prevents us from believing in them. We can hardly imagine that at those remote periods, when geography was so imperfect, and the world enveloped in obscurity, philosophers should quit their country, and pass through a thousand obstacles, over a considerable part of the ancient continent, without what we should consider more substantial motives. But all facts that are difficult of explanation are not to be rejected, and facts of this kind multiply upon us as we penetrate further into the ancient history of the East. What we are tempted to think is that the obstacles were not so great as we have imagined, nor the countries so entirely unknown. The recollections of ties of kindred still, it may be, linked the nations of the antique world one to another; and hospitality, the virtue of barbarous nations, dispensed the traveller from the necessity of many precautions that he could not now safely neglect. Religion favoured their progress,

which was in some measure but a long pilgrimage from temple to temple, from school to school.

At all times commerce has had her caravans, and from the highest antiquity there were in Asia certain tracks marked out, which naturally continued to be followed, till the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope changed the direction of these long journeys. In our opinion the civilised nations of antiquity were by no means so much strangers to each other, or so isolated, as is commonly supposed, because the motives that urged them to communicate one with another are unknown to us. We are sometimes disposed to place to the account of their ignorance what is in fact only attributable to our own. In this respect we might justly apply to ourselves what is said in relation to morals by one of the most celebrated disciples of the sage whose opinions we have just been inquiring into. "A vivid light shone on the highest antiquity, of which only a few rays have reached us. It appears to us that the ancients were in darkness because we see them only through the thick clouds from which we ourselves have but just issued. Man is an infant born at midnight, who when he sees the sun rise, thinks that yesterday has never existed." Confucius was in frequent communication with Lao-tze, but it is difficult to know what was his opinion of the doctrines of the patriarch of the Doctors of Reason. One day he went to pay him a visit, and when he returned to his disciples, he remained three days without pronouncing a word. Tseu-kong was surprised at this, and asked the cause of his silence. "When," said Confucius, "I see a man make use of his thoughts to escape me, like a bird that flies away, I dispose mine like a bow armed with its arrows to pierce him, and I never

fail to reach him and master him. When I see a man making use of his thoughts to escape me like an agile stag, I arrange mine like a running dog to pursue him, and I never fail to come up with him, and throw him down; when a man makes use of his thoughts to escape from me like a fish of the deep, I arrange mine like the hook of the fisherman, and I never fail to take him, and get him into my power. But as to the dragon who rises on the clouds and floats in ether, I cannot pursue him. I have seen Lao-tze, and he is like the dragon. At his voice my mouth remained wide open; my tongue came out of it with astonishment, and I had not the power to draw it back; my soul was plunged into perplexity, and has not been able to recover its previous calmness."

Whatever may be said of the philosophical ideas of Lao-tze, his disciples, the Doctors of Reason, do not at present enjoy any great popularity. The superstitions to which they abandon themselves are so extravagant, that the most ignorant make them an object of sarcasm. They have rendered themselves especially notorious by their pretended elixir of immortality; though they gained great credit for it with many famous Emperors. The Chinese annals are full of the disputes and quarrels of the Lao-tze with the disciples of Confucius, and the latter have employed the weapons of ridicule against them with the greatest success, and have never failed to turn the laugh against the Doctors of Reason, as well as against the Bonzes, the priests of Buddhism, which is the third religion of China.

Towards the middle of the first century of our era, the Emperors of the dynasty of Han admitted Indian Buddhism officially into their dominions. This religion,

which has material representations of the divinity, spread rapidly among the Chinese under the name of the "religion of Fo," an imperfect transcription of the name of Buddha. So vast a religious system, professed by more than three hundred millions of followers, well deserves that we should enter into some details with respect to its origin, its doctrine, and its propagation among the nations of high Asia. The word Buddha is a very ancient generic name, having in Sanscrit a double root. The one signifies being, existence; the other wisdom, superior intelligence. It is the name by which was originally designated the creative omnipotent God; but it has been extended to those who worshipped him, and sought to raise themselves to him by contemplation and holiness. All the Buddhists, however, whom we have met in China, Tartary, Thibet, and Ceylon, intend by this name to denote an actual historical personage, who has become celebrated throughout Asia, and who is regarded as the founder of the institutions and doctrines comprised under the general name of Buddhism.

In the eyes of Buddhists this personage is sometimes a man, and sometimes a god, or rather he is both one and the other. He is a divine incarnation, a man-god, who came into the world to enlighten men, to redeem them, and point out to them the way of salvation. This idea of a redemption of the human race by a divine incarnation is so general and popular among the Buddhists, that we have everywhere found it reduced to a neat formula, expressed in remarkable terms. If we addressed to a Mongol or a Thibetan this question, "Who is Buddha?" He replied instantly, "The Saviour of Men." The marvellous birth of Buddha, his life and his instructions, contain a great number of moral truths

and dogmas professed in Christianity, and which we need not be surprised to find also among other nations, since these truths are traditional, and have always belonged to the heritage of humanity. There must be among a pagan people more or less of Christian truth, in proportion as they have been more or less faithful in preserving the deposit of primitive traditions.

From the concordant testimony of Indian, Chinese, Thibetan, Mongol, and Cingalese books, we may place the birth of Buddha about the year 960 before Christ; the variation of a few years, more or less, is of little consequence. Klaproth has extracted from the Mongol books, which are merely translations from Thibetan or Sanscrit, the legend of Buddha, of which we are about to give a succinct analysis.

“Soutadanna, chief of the House of Chakia, of the caste of Brahmins, reigned in India over the powerful Empire of Magadha, in Southern Bahar, the capital of which was Kaberchara. He married Mahamaia, ‘The Great Illusion,’ but did not consummate his marriage with her. She, although a virgin, conceived by divine influence, and on the fifteenth day of the second month of spring, she brought into the world a son, whom she had borne in her womb three hundred days. Taking him in her arms, she presented him to a king, who was also an incarnation of Brahma (in Mongol, Esroun Tingri), and who enveloped him in a piece of precious stuff, and lavished upon him the most tender cares. Another king, an incarnation of Indra (in Mongol, Hormousta Tingri), baptized the young god in divine water. The child received the name of Arddha Chiddi, and was immediately recognised as a divine person, it being foretold that he would surpass in holiness all

preceding incarnations. Every one adored him, saluting him with the title of God of Gods (in Mongol, Tingri in Tingri). Ten virgins were charged to serve him, seven to bathe him, seven to dress him, seven to rock him to sleep, seven to keep him clean, seven to amuse him with their sports, while thirty-five others charmed his ears by songs and instruments of music. When he arrived at the age of ten, they gave him several masters, amongst whom were distinguished the sage Babourenou, from whom he learned poetry, music, drawing, mathematics, and medicine, but he soon embarrassed his tutor by questions, and afterwards begged him to teach him all languages, an indispensable condition, he said, of his apostleship, which was to enlighten the world, and spread among all nations the knowledge of religion and of the true doctrine. The preceptor, however, was acquainted only with the idiom of India, and the pupil therefore taught the tutor fifty foreign languages with their peculiar characters, and he soon surpassed the whole human race.

“When he had reached the proper age, he refused to marry unless they could find him a virgin possessing thirty-two virtues and perfections, and by dint of searching they did at last discover one, but it was necessary to dispute possession of her with her uncle who had also sought her in marriage. He was then twenty years old—the marriage took place—and the following year the young wife brought into the world a son, and afterwards a daughter. Soon renouncing worldly vanities, he gave himself up to the practice of virtue and a contemplative life, and quitted his wife, his family, and his preceptor, who, afflicted at such a resolution, made vain efforts to dissuade him from this

step. They even signified to him that they would keep him a prisoner in his palace of Kāberchara, but he declared that he would get out in spite of them, and he said to his tutor, 'Adieu, father; I am going to return to the condition of a penitent; I renounce you, my wife, my dear son, my empire; I have reasons sufficient to follow my vocation. Do not hinder me from accomplishing this step; it is for me a sacred duty.'

"Mounted on a horse brought to him by a celestial spirit, he then took flight, and went to the kingdom of Oudipa, on the borders of Naracara. There he conferred on himself the sacerdotal order, cut his hair off, and assumed the costume of a penitent. He also substituted for his own name that of Gotamâ, that is 'He who extinguishes and kills the senses,' (*go*, senses, and *tamâ*, darkness).

"When exhausted by his long austerities, he restored himself by taking the milk of the cows that Soutadanna, his father, had conducted into the neighbourhood of his retreat. A great ape Khakho-Monsou came often to see Gotamâ; one evening it brought him some cakes made of the honey of wild bees, and figs, and presented them to him for his repast. Gotamâ, according to his custom, watered the figs and the honey with holy water, and then ate of them. The ape leaping for joy, fell into a well, and in memory of the accident the place was consecrated under the name of 'Place of the offerings of the Ape.' One day, when an elephant intoxicated with cocoa-wine was sent against him by a bad genius, he pacified it by merely making a sign with his finger.

"He afterwards chose a still wilder retreat, whither he was followed by only two disciples, Chari, the son of his

preceptor, and the celebrated Malou-Toni. Yet, remote as this retreat was, his enemies found means to discover it, and thought to tempt him by insidious questions. Eriktou and Debeltoun presented themselves first and inquired with feigned modesty, 'Gotamâ, what is thy doctrine? Who was thy tutor? From whom didst thou receive the priesthood?' 'I am holy by my own merit,' replied Gotamâ; 'it is I who have consecrated myself my own minister. What have I to do with other teachers? Religion has penetrated my being.' He repelled the seductions of many women, and on that occasion caused the tutelary genius of this globe to spring from the earth, and bear witness to his virtues. Five favourite disciples were then associated with their master, and their names became celebrated in the history of Buddhism; they are Godinia, Datoî, Langba, Muigtsan and Sangdan. At the end of six years he quitted the desert to go and fulfil the apostolic duties for which he had prepared himself by long fasting. His disciples adored him, and immediately there shone forth a glory from the face of the saint. He then took the route to Varanasi (Benares) to make his entry, but absorbed in ecstatic contemplation, he made three times the circuit of this sacred town before ascending the throne, which the founders of three anterior religious epochs had successively occupied. After having taken possession of this supreme seat, he adopted the name of Chakia-Mouni, 'the penitent of Chakia,' lived in solitude, and continued the preparatory meditations by which he fitted himself for his new functions. Followed by his five disciples he afterwards crossed the deserts, and betook himself to the sea-shore, being every where received with veneration. Returning to Benares he there unfolded his

doctrine, surrounded by an innumerable multitude of auditors of all classes. His teachings are contained in a collection of eight hundred great volumes, known under the general name of Gandjour, or Verbal Instruction. They turn exclusively on the metaphysics of creation, and on the frail and perishable nature of man.

“This monumental work is found in all the libraries of the great Buddhist convents. The finest edition is that issued at Peking from the Imperial press. It is in four languages, Thibetan, Mongol, Mantchou and Chinese. The government is in the habit of sending copies of it as presents to the great Lama monasteries. Chakia-Mouni experienced a lively opposition from the priests attached to the ancient creeds, but he triumphed over all his adversaries, after holding a discussion with them; and their chief prostrated himself before him and acknowledged himself vanquished. In memory of this triumph there was instituted a festival that lasted for the first fifteen days of the first month. Chakia-Mouni then revised the principal foundations of morals and the decalogue. Moral principles are reduced to four. 1st, mercy established on an immoveable basis; 2ndly, the aversion to all cruelty; 3rdly, a boundless compassion towards all creatures; 4thly, an inflexible adherence to the law. Then follows the decalogue, or the ten commandments, and special prohibitions: 1st, not to kill; 2nd, not to steal; 3rd, to be chaste; 4thly, not to bear false witness; 5thly, not to lie; 6thly, not to swear; 7thly, to avoid impure words; 8thly, to be disinterested; 9thly, not to avenge yourself; 10thly, not to be superstitious. This last prohibition is very remarkable, and the modern Buddhists certainly do not pay much attention to it. Chakia-Mouni declared that these precepts con-

cerning human actions were revealed to him after the four grand trials that he had gone through when he devoted himself to a state of sanctity.

“ This code of morals was beginning to be diffused over all Asia when he quitted the earth, casting off his material envelope, to be re-absorbed into the universal soul, which is himself. He was then eighty-four years of age. Before bidding adieu to his disciples, he predicted that the reign of his doctrine would last five thousand years, but that at the end of this time there would be another Buddha, another man-god, predestined ages before to be the teacher of the human race. ‘ Until that epoch,’ he added, ‘ my religion will be the object of persecution, and my faithful ones will be obliged to quit India, and retire to the highest summits of Thibet, and this plateau, from the top of which the observer commands the world, will become the palace, the sanctuary, and the metropolis of the true faith.’ ”

Such is the abridged history of the famous founder of the Buddhist religion, who endeavoured to overthrow Brahminism, the ancient religion of the Hindoos. Buddha employed both miracles and preaching as the means of diffusing his religion, and his history, as well as that of his disciples, is filled with prodigies and marvels of the most extravagant kind.

The dominant character of Buddhism is, however, a spirit of mildness, equality, and fraternity, which contrasts favourably with the hardness and arrogance of Brahminism; and Chakia-Mouni and his disciples endeavoured to put mankind at large in possession of the truths which were before regarded as the exclusive property of the privileged classes.

The perfection of the Brahmins was in some measure

egotistical; their religion was only for themselves. They gave themselves up to severe penance, but it was in order to share in another life the abode of Brahma.

The devotion of the Asiatic Buddhist was more disinterested. Not aspiring to elevate himself alone, he practised virtue, and applied himself to gain perfection, in order to share its benefits with other men. In the institutions of an order of religious mendicants, which in a short time increased to a prodigious extent, Chakia attracted to himself, and consoled, the poor and the unfortunate. The Brahmins mocked him, because he received into the number of his disciples miserable men, who were rejected by the first classes of Indian society. But he contented himself with replying, "My law is a law of mercy for all." One day the Brahmins were scandalised at seeing a daughter of the inferior caste of the *Tchandala* received as a religious woman. Chakia said: "There is not between a Brahmin and a man of another caste the difference that there is between gold and a stone, between light and darkness. The Brahmin, in fact, did not proceed out of the ether, or the wind. He did not cleave the earth to appear in the daylight like the fire that issues from the wood of the Arani. The Brahmin was born of a woman, like the tchandala; where, then, dost thou see the cause that should render the one noble and the other vile? The Brahmin himself, when he is dead, is abandoned as an object vile and impure, precisely like a person from another caste; where, then, is the difference?"

The religious systems of Buddhism and Brahminism resemble each other closely in many points; and the bitter persecutions which the Buddhists have experienced from the Brahmins are attributable less to a divergence

of opinion upon dogmas, than to their admission of all men, without distinction of caste, to civil and sacerdotal functions, and to future rewards. The empire of Brahminism depending essentially on the hierarchy of caste, they could not but treat as enemies the reformers who proclaimed the equality of all men in this world and the next.

These persecutions were long, and extremely violent; and if we give credit to the traditions and books of the Buddhists, the number of victims must have been incalculable. At length, towards the sixth century of our era, Brahminism obtained a decisive victory over the partisans of the new religion; and the latter, expelled from Hindostan, took refuge in the Himalaya mountains, and thence spread over Thibet, Bucharia, Mongolia, China, the Burmese Empire, Japan, and even as far as Ceylon. Among the Buddhist nations we have visited, those who appear to us most sincerely attached to their religion are, first, the Mongols, then come the Thibetans, in the third place the Cingalese, and lowest in the scale stand the Chinese, who, indeed, have fallen into complete scepticism.

On our passage to Ceylon, some Buddhists of that country told us that their books alone contained the pure doctrine of Buddha, and that, according to the traditions of the country, when he was flying from the persecutions of the Brahmins, he retired into their island, and that afterwards he rose into the skies from the summit of one of their mountains, where he left the print of his foot. It is the mountain called at present Adam's Peak, as the Mussulmans pretend that the impression is that of the foot of the first of men. In the interior of the island is the famous temple of Candy, where the Buddhists preserve, as they say, one of Buddha's teeth.

CHAP. VI.

ALL RELIGIONS CONDEMNED BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.—FORMULAS OF SCEPTICISM.—CONDITION OF THE BONZES OF CHINA.—BUDDHIST MONASTERIES.—RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE.—TEMPLE OF POU-TOU.—LIBRARY OF THE MONASTERY.—VISIT TO THE SUPERIOR OF THE BONZES.—PROFOUND RESPECT OF THE CHINESE FOR WRITING.—CONVENT OF BONZESSES.—CEREMONIES TO RECAL THE SOULS OF THE DYING WHEN THEY ARE ESCAPING.—DEATH OF A YOUNG BACHELOR.—MOURNING OF THE CHINESE.—SINGULAR MODE OF LAMENTING THE DEAD.—INTERMENTS.—WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS.—CHINESE CLASSIFICATION OF VARIOUS AGES OF LIFE.—MARRIAGE IN CHINA.—SERVITUDE OF WOMEN.—DISCORD IN DOMESTIC LIFE.—EXAMPLES.—SECT OF ABSTINENT WOMEN.

THE three religions of which we have spoken in the preceding chapter, and which are personified by Confucius, Lao-tze, and Buddha, or Fo, still exist in China. After having struggled fiercely for ages, the one against the other, they are now united in universal indifferentism, and there reigns among them the most profound peace. This result must be principally attributed to the literary classes.

The Doctors of Reason and the Buddhists had abandoned themselves to so many superstitions, that the disciples of Confucius had no great difficulty in turning them into ridicule. The pamphlets full of spirited satire which they have continually been firing off at the Bonzes and the Tao-sse have at length stifled in these people every

religious sentiment, and the Emperors themselves have done their part towards plunging the nation into the scepticism which is eating away its spiritual life, and effecting its dissolution with frightful rapidity. There is still extant a collection of sentences composed by the Emperor Khang-hi for the instruction of his people; and Yoang-tching, who succeeded him on the Imperial throne, has made commentaries upon his father's sentences, which are intended to be read in public by the magistrates. One of the points on which the princely commentator particularly insists, is the propriety of cherishing an aversion to all false sects, that is to say, in fact, for all religions. He passes them in review, and condemns them all, without exception; but that of Buddhism, which is the most widely diffused in China, is especially the object of his reprobation. He speaks of the dogmas on which it rests with contempt; he turns its practices into derision.

The Buddhists, like other followers of Indian sects, attach much importance to certain words or syllables, which they repeat continually, thinking to purify themselves from their sins by the mere articulation of these holy syllables, and to effect their salvation by this easy method. The Imperial commentator rallies them keenly upon this practice. "Suppose," he says, "you had violated the laws in some way, and that you were taken into the hall of judgment to be punished; do you think, if you were to go on bawling a thousand times over, 'Your Excellency! your Excellency!' the magistrate would be any more likely to spare you for that?" In other passages, this comparison tends to nothing less than the destruction of all idea of worship or homage rendered to the Divinity. These sentences are real les-

sons in atheism, addressed by a sovereign to his subjects.

“If you do not burn any paper in honour of Fo, and if you do not deposit any offerings on his altar, he will be displeased, you think, and send his judgments on your head. What a miserable creature must your god Fo be then! Let us take the example of the magistrate of your district: should you never go to compliment him, and pay your court to him, if you are honest people, attentive to your duty, he will not the less be well disposed towards you; but if you transgress the law, commit violence, and encroach on the rights of others, he will always be dissatisfied with you, though you should find a thousand ways of flattering him.” The Christian religion is, of course, not spared by the commentator of the Emperor Khang-hi, who was very favourably disposed towards the missionaries, but regarded them merely as artists and learned men, from whom he might obtain some advantage for the State, as the following passage from his successor, Yoang-tching, will tend to prove. “The sect of the Lord of Heaven,” he says, “a sect that is perpetually talking about heaven and earth, and beings without substance or shadow, this religion, also, is perverted and corrupt; but as the Europeans who teach it understand astronomy and mathematics, the Government has employed them to correct the calendar. It by no means meant, however, to imply by that, that their religion was good; and you must not believe anything they tell you.”

Such instruction as this, coming from so high a quarter, could not fail to bear fruit; and all belief in spiritual things and a future life has been accordingly extinguished.

The religious sentiment has vanished from the national mind; the rival doctrines have lost all authority; and their partisans, grown sceptical and impious, have fallen into the abyss of indifferentism, in which they have given each other the kiss of peace. Religious discussions have entirely ceased; and the whole Chinese nation has proclaimed this famous formula, with which everybody is satisfied, *San-kiao-y-kiao*, that is, "the three religions are but one." Thus all the Chinese are at the same time partisans of Confucius, Lao-tze, and Buddha; or rather, they are nothing at all: they reject all faith, all dogma, to live merely by their more or less depraved and corrupted instincts. The literary classes only have retained a certain taste for the classical books and moral precepts of Confucius, which every one explains according to his own fancy, invoking always the "*ly*," or principle of rationalism, which has become the only one generally recognised.

But although they have thus made a *tabula rasa* of their religious creeds, the ancient denominations have remained, and the Chinese still like to make use of them; but they are now only the memorials of feeling long since dead. Nothing more clearly indicates this desolating scepticism, than a formula of politeness exchanged between unknown persons on their first meeting. It is customary to ask to "what sublime religion" you belong. One, perhaps, will call himself a Confucian, another a Buddhist, a third a disciple of Lao-tze, a fourth a follower of Mahomet, of whom there are many in China; and then every one begins to pronounce a panegyric on the religion to which he does *not* belong, as politeness requires; after which they all repeat in chorus, "*Pou-toun-kiao, toun-ly*," "Religions are many; reason

is one; we are all brothers." This phrase is on the lips of every Chinese, and they bandy it from one to the other with the most exquisite urbanity. It is indeed a clear and concise expression of their feeling on religious questions. In their eyes, a worship is merely an affair of taste and fashion, to which no more importance is to be attached than to the colour of your garments.

The government, the literary classes, the whole nation in fact, regards all religions as things futile and of no interest; and it may therefore easily be supposed that there reigns in China an incomparable toleration for every kind of worship. The Chinese enjoy, in fact, the most perfect liberty in this respect, provided always that the authorities can be convinced that under pretence of a religious association you are not concealing a political object injurious to the State. For this reason only, as we have said before, the Christians are reproached and persecuted by the magistrates.

No one ever thinks of persecuting the Bonzes and the Tao-sse. They are left to live in poverty and contempt in their obscure abodes, without any one ever troubling himself about them, with the exception, perhaps, of an occasional practitioner of the art of magic who may come to consult them about casting lots, or to burn some painted paper and perfumes at the feet of an idol, or to order a few prayers in the hope of immediately making a large fortune by them. The extremely slender fees that the Bonzes receive on such occasions, however, would be insufficient for their maintenance, if they neglected to make up the deficiency by some private industry. The greater part of them keep a school; and those who are not sufficiently versed in the classical books for this are compelled, in some

measure, to wander about the villages and beg their rice. The revenues of the pagodas are not now as considerable as they were at some periods; and from the Bonzes and Tao-sse being able to obtain only so precarious and humiliating a subsistence, their number is continually declining. It is hardly conceivable why men not supported by a religious faith should resign themselves to such abject poverty; and, in fact, this priesthood of an extinct religion and a forsaken worship is compelled to recruit itself in a singular manner.

The Bonze who is attached to a pagoda buys, for a few sapecks, the child of some indigent family, shaves his head, and makes a disciple of him, or rather a servant. The poor child vegetates thus in the company of his master, and by degrees accustoms himself to that mode of life. Subsequently he becomes the successor and heir of him to whom he has been sold; and he then seeks, in his turn, to procure for himself a small disciple.

In this manner is perpetuated the race of Bonzes, whose influence has been so great at different epochs, as may be seen in the annals of China, but which at the present day has completely lost all authority and credit. The people have no longer the smallest respect for them. They are often brought on the stage, and made to play the most infamous parts; indeed, such is the contempt into which they have fallen, that the insurgents have lately thought to render themselves popular by massacring them everywhere on their passage.

There were formerly in the environs of the most celebrated pagodas, great monasteries, where numerous Bonzes lived in community, in the manner of the Lamas of Thibet and Tartary. They possessed rich

libraries, in which all Chinese and Indian books that had any relation to the Buddhist religion were kept. In these were to be seen the finest editions of the "*Gandgour*," or "Verbal Instructions of Buddha," in 800 large volumes, and the "*Dandgour*," in 232. This last work is a sort of religious Encyclopædia, or ecclesiastical history of Buddhism. At present, however, these famous libraries are almost deserted. We have had occasion to visit a great number of them, and among the rest that of Pou-tou, one of the most renowned in the Celestial Empire.

Pou-tou is an island of the great archipelago of Chusan, on the coasts of the province of Tche-kiang. More than 100 monasteries, more or less important, and two of which were founded by Emperors, are scattered over the sides of the mountains and valleys of this picturesque and enchanting island, which nature and art have combined to adorn with their utmost magnificence. All over it you find delightful gardens, full of beautiful flowers,—grottoes cut in the living rock, amidst groves of bamboo and other trees, with aromatic banks. The habitations of the Bonzes are sheltered from the scorching rays of the sun by umbrageous foliage, and scattered about in the prettiest situations imaginable. Thousands of winding paths cross the valleys in various directions, and the brooks and rivulets, by means of pretty bridges of stone or painted wood, and form the communications between the scattered dwellings. In the centre of the island rise two vast and brilliant edifices—Buddhist temples—the yellow bricks of which announce that their construction is due to imperial munificence. The religious architecture of the Chinese does not at all resemble ours.

They have no idea of the majestic, solemn, and perhaps somewhat melancholy style, that harmonises so well with the feelings which ought to be inspired by a place devoted to meditation and prayer. When they wish to build a pagoda, they look out for the most gay and smiling site they can find on the declivity of a mountain or in a valley; they plant it with great trees of the evergreen species; they trace about it a number of paths, on the sides of which they place flowering shrubs, creeping plants, and bushes. It is through these cool and fragrant avenues you reach the building, which is surrounded by galleries, and has less the air of a temple than of a rural abode charmingly situated in the midst of a park or garden.

The principal temple of Pou-tou is reached by a long avenue of grand secular trees, whose thick foliage is filled with troops of crows with white heads; and their cawings and flapping of wings keep up a continual clamour. At the end of the avenue is a magnificent lake, surrounded with shrubs that lean over its waters like weeping willows. Turtle and gold fish gleam through them; and mandarin-ducks, in their gaily-coloured plumage, play over their surface, amidst the splendid water-lilies whose rich corollas rise majestically upon tender green stalks spotted with black. Several bridges of red and green wood are thrown over this lake, and lead to flights of steps, by which you ascend to the first of the temple buildings—a kind of porch, supported upon eight enormous granite columns. On the right and left are stationed, like sentinels, four statues of colossal size, and two side gates lead to the vestibule of the principal nave, where is enthroned a Buddhist Trinity, representing the Past, the Present, and

the Future. These three statues are entirely gilt, and, although in a crouching posture, of gigantic dimensions—at least twelve feet high. Buddha is in the midst, his hands interlaced, and gravely placed on his majestic abdomen. He represents the Past, and the unalterable and eternal quiet to which it has attained; the two others, which have the arm and the right hand raised, in sign of their activity, the Present and Future. Before each idol is an altar covered with little vases for offerings, and cassolets of chiselled bronze, where perfumes are constantly burning.

A crowd of secondary divinities are ranged round the hall, the ornaments of which are composed of enormous lanterns of painted paper or horn—square, round, oval—indeed, of all forms and colours; and the walls are hung with broad strips of satin, with sentences and maxims.

The third hall is consecrated to *Kouang-yn*, whom the greater number of accounts of China persist in regarding as a goddess of porcelain, and sometimes also of fecundity. According to the Buddhist mythology, *Kouang-yn* is a person of the Indian Trimourti, or Triune God, representing the creative power.

Finally, the fourth hall is a pantheon, or pandemonium, containing a complete assortment of hideous idols, with ogres' and reptiles' faces. Here you see, huddled together pell-mell, the gods of heaven and earth; fabulous monsters, patrons of war, of the silk manufacture, of agriculture, and of medicine; the images of the saints of antiquity, philosophers, statesmen, warriors, literary men—in a word, the most heterogeneous and grotesque assembly conceivable.

This temple is divided into four parts. Its building

and decoration must have cost enormous sums; but at present it is in a complete state of dilapidation. The rich roof of gilt and varnished tiles is broken and defaced, so that when rain falls, it washes the heads of the poor idols, who seem to need an umbrella more than the perfumes that are burning at their feet. The other pagodas are in no better condition; some are falling entirely into ruins, and the gods lie prostrate, with their faces to the ground, and serve sometimes for seats to the curious travellers who visit this holy isle.

The vast monasteries of Pou-tou, where once dwelt multitudes of Bonzes, are now entirely abandoned to legions of rats and great spiders, which peacefully weave their enormous webs in the deserted cells. The cleanest and best preserved place is the library, and the Bonze in charge of it desired that we should pay it a visit; but we found it very inferior to those that we had seen in Tartary and Thibet. It possessed about 8000 volumes, enveloped in yellow satin, carefully ticketed and ranged in order in cases surrounding a vast saloon. They relate exclusively to the theology and liturgy of the religion of Buddha. Most of them are translations; but some are simple Chinese transcriptions of Indian books, which the Chinese can read fluently, without understanding a word of their contents. We hinted to the librarian that books of this kind could not be particularly instructive to the Bonzes.

“The religious family of Buddha,” he replied, “finds now no more attraction in books. The Bonzes of Pou-tou read none—no more those they can understand, than those they cannot. They never set a foot in the library. I see none but strangers who come to visit the place out of curiosity.”

The religious Buddhist, who made this confession, did not seem to partake the indifference of his brethren; on the contrary, he was a true type of the bibliopole. For eighteen years that he had resided at Pou-tou, he had scarcely quitted his library. He passed in it the whole day and a part of the night, continually occupied, he said, in sounding the unfathomable depths of the doctrine. Some books, that were lying open on a table in the corner, attested, in fact, that he was doing something else than merely keeping the place; and if we had been disposed to listen to him, he was quite ready and willing to favour us with a review of the collection, accompanied by a little analysis of the contents of each volume. He did, indeed, begin with wonderful enthusiasm; and it was easy to see that he did not often find visitors complaisant enough to listen to his dissertations on what for him had become a true worship. But want of time compelled us to deprive him and ourselves of the pleasure of this learned oration.

We paid a visit to the superior of the island, whose habitation was situated near the principal temple. The apartments he occupied were almost clean; and it might even be seen that certain notions of luxury had formerly presided over their arrangement. This superior was a man of about forty years of age, whose language did not indicate any great skill in literature or theology, but whose cunning eye, and brief emphatic speech, denoted a man accustomed to business and command. He told us that for some years past he had been endeavouring to get the pagodas of the island restored, and that almost all the Bonzes under his authority were now in the interior of the Empire, in

quest of the funds necessary to the realisation of his project. The collections made, however, he said, had hitherto been very small; and he did not fail to add many long lamentations over the decay of zeal for the worship of Buddha. As he knew that we were missionaries, we thought we might frankly express our own opinion on the subject of the indifference he was deploring. "We are not at all surprised," said we, "to see the Chinese cold and careless towards a worship including so many contradictory articles of faith, and which darken and confuse common sense."

"That is the thing," he replied; "your marvellous intelligence has seized the true point of the difficulty."

"Men may be seduced for a time by vain superstitions; but sooner or later they perceive their futility, and easily detach themselves from them."

"These words are full of clearness and precision."

"A religion which has no root in truth cannot satisfy the heart and mind of man. The nations may put faith in it for a time; but their faith is neither firm nor durable."

"That is the true explanation. The central nation has no more faith, and that is why my Bonzes come back with empty hands. It is known that religions are numerous, but that Reason is immutable."

"False religions, based upon lies, have, indeed, only a certain time; but truth is eternal, and consequently for all times and places. The religion of the Lord of Heaven, which is the expression of the truth, is for all men—it is immutable as its foundation."

This chief Bonze was tolerably well acquainted with the Christian doctrine; he had read several books concerning it, and among others the celebrated one of

Father Ricci, upon the "True Knowledge of God." He had the politeness to tell us that our religion was sublime—incomparable, and that, as for his own, it had not even common sense; and then he added the formula customary among the Chinese—*Pou-toun-kiao toun-ly*—"Religions are many; reason is one:" and with this deplorable conclusion he abruptly changed the subject, and began to talk to us of the fine plans he had in his head for the restoration of the pagodas.

As we left Pou-tou, we met several boats making for the port of the little island. They were laden with Bonzes, returning from their quest; and we inquired whether they had been fortunate. "Oh, yes," cried a young novice, in a transport of joy; "we are bringing back plenty of sapecks!"

Scarcely had he uttered the words before he received a hard thump on the head from an old Bonze, who was sitting, hunched up, near this indiscreet young person.

"Shaven devil!" cried the worthy man, "will you never cure yourself of telling lies? We sapecks indeed!"

The poor child hid his face in his hands, and began to cry. He seemed to understand, too late, that he had committed an imprudence, and that it is not well to reveal the secret of one's riches to the first comer. The old Bonze had had more experience. "There," said he, giving another cuff to the poor novice, "that's for your lies! I'll give you more knocks than we have sapecks." Then turning to us, he said, with bland politeness, "It is necessary to correct youth when it outrages the truth; that is an incontestable principle. Our excursion into the district of Han-Tcheou has not been fruitful. The rice harvest had been a bad one,

and the people were in indigence; how, then, could they bestow alms on the family of Buddha? We have, however, had the happiness to collect a large quantity of neglected paper, and thus to save innumerable written characters from profanation. Respect for written characters has been inculcated by the saints of antiquity." And, as he spoke, he pointed to a little boat following them, that contained a cargo of waste paper.

The flotilla of Bonzes then continued its route; and we could not help thinking that they had probably collected a tolerable sum, or the old Bonze would not have been so hard upon the young novice for his indiscretion. When a Chinese has money, he will never admit that he has; and if he boasts of having it, you may almost always be sure that his purse is empty. This mania is not peculiar to the Chinese character; it may be found elsewhere.

In showing us the boat filled with old bits of paper, the Bonze had said that respect for written characters had been recommended by the saints of antiquity; and we had, in fact, remarked, during our long abode in the Celestial Empire, that generally all the Chinese profess a profound veneration for the written word. They take great care not to put to profane uses any paper on which letters are written or printed. Coarse paper is sold at a very low price for packages and other similar purposes; but they preserve with respect whatever has writing on it, and avoid treading upon it, or dirtying it. Even the children have the same habit.

We do not believe that the Chinese attach any superstitious idea to this practice; they appear simply to intend by it to pay honour to human thought, which

may be said to be incarnate, and fixed in writing. In this point of view, the scrupulous solicitude of the Chinese for the written character is, perhaps, worthy of admiration.

As, however, even in China, all are not as careful as it is supposed they ought to be of written paper, but leave it, either from neglect or forgetfulness, exposed to profanation, a certain class of Bonzes make it their special mission to institute everywhere an exact and minute search after it. They traverse towns, villages, and frequented high roads, with a hod on their backs, and a hook in their hands, and they stop by preference in places where rubbish and filth is thrown, and pick up carefully every scrap of paper they can see. Their collections are then carried into a pagoda, to be burnt before the images of the sages of antiquity.

The majority of the most celebrated pagodas of China are nearly in the same state of decay as that of Pou-tou. Decay and want of faith are every where perceptible, and nothing indicates that these Buddhist edifices will ever recover their ancient lustre. The remembrance of their renown attracts to them, at certain epochs, a number of visitors; but it is curiosity and not religion that brings them. They go to burn incense at the feet of the idols, or to bargain with the Bonzes for prayers; but these votaries are in fact mere pleasure seekers, and their journeys to the pagodas little parties got up for the sake of recreation. You do also occasionally meet people walking in the places sacred to Buddhist devotion, but they are mere promenaders, not pilgrims.

There do not exist any monasteries, properly so called, where Bonzes live in community. The religious Budd-

hists scattered over the different provinces of the Empire are independent of one another, and unconnected by any tie of discipline or hierarchy. In each house there is indeed a chief, but he is rather an administrator of temporal goods than a spiritual superior. He does not exercise any authority over his brethren, who live without any rule, just as their caprice dictates, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, being often absent for a long time from the monastery, going vagabondising about the country, as long as they can pick up a living, and only returning home when driven by hunger; indeed, if they happen to find any where a position to suit them, they do not come back at all. To make yourself a Bonze, you have only to shave your head and put on a robe with long wide sleeves; to cease to be one, merely to change your coat and let your hair grow, wearing a false tail until your own has attained the fashionable length. The religious Buddhists of China, it is obvious, are far from having the influence and importance of the Lamas of Tartary and Thibet.

Convents of Bonzesses are rather numerous in China, especially in the provinces of the South, and their costume differs very little from that of the Bonzes; they also have their heads shaven; they are not cloistered, and are frequently met with in the streets. If we should give credit to public rumour, we should say also that there reign great disorders in the interior of these establishments, and it is certain that respectable people, who are a little anxious about their reputation, will not set foot in them.

From all that we have said concerning the present condition of the various modes of worship recognised in China, and the position of their ministers, it is allowable

to conclude that the Chinese are living absolutely without religion. There remain among them a few superstitious practices, to which they yield, rather from habit than conviction, and from which they are very easily detached. No account whatever is taken of religious belief by the legislature, and the magistrates only speak of it to turn it into ridicule. The idea of an atheistical government, and an atheistical law, which in France was so extolled in the Chamber of Deputies, has been actually realised in China, but it does not seem that the nation has greatly gained thereby in grandeur and prosperity.

During our residence at Ou-tchang-fou, in the establishment called *Si-men-yuen*, or Garden of the Western Gate, we happened to be witnesses of an occurrence which shows how possible it is to reconcile the most superstitious practices with the total absence of any religious conviction. We have said that this vast institution, where we were awaiting the day of our departure, had various tenants of different classes. Opposite to the apartment assigned to us, in a spacious court, there was another wing of the building, in a rather elegant style. This was occupied by a retired Mandarin, with a numerous family, who had held formerly a high office in the magistracy, and who had delayed for two years his return to his native province, in the hope that his influence with the first functionaries of the town might obtain for his eldest son a small Mandarinate. This aspirant had as yet only the grade of Bachelor, though he was married, and had three children. During these two years of expectation, the hopes of the old Mandarin had not been realised, but his son, instead of being promoted to a public office, had fallen ill of a malady that

seemed likely to carry him to the tomb. At the time of our arrival we found the family plunged into great grief, for the state of the sick man was so alarming that they were already preparing to make him a coffin. The death of this young man would, it was evident, be regarded by the whole family as a terrible event, for he was its hope and support.

On the very first night that we passed in our new lodging, the Garden of the Western Gate resounded with cries and the letting off of fireworks, which were heard, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, but almost without interruption. The purpose of all this clamour was to save the dying man.

The Chinese think, as we do, that death is the result of the definitive separation of the soul from the body, but they also think that the degree of illness is in direct proportion to the number of attempts which the soul makes to escape, and when the sufferer experiences the terrible crises that endanger his life, it is a proof that the soul has been momentarily absent, that it keeps going away to a certain distance, but returns again. The distance being so small, it is still able to exercise considerable influence on the body, and keep it alive, although it suffers dreadfully from this transitory separation; if the dying person falls into the last agony, it is evident that the soul has gone with the firm resolution not to come back again. Nevertheless all hope is not yet lost, and there is a method of making it take up its abode again in the unfortunate body that is struggling with death. They try first the effect of persuasion, and endeavour by prayers and supplications to induce the soul to change its resolution. They run after it, they conjure it to come back, they describe in

the most moving terms the lamentable state to which they will be reduced if this obstinate soul will not hear reason. They tell it that the happiness of the entire family depends upon it, they urge it, flatter it, overwhelm it with entreaties. "Come back, come back!" they cry, "what have we done, what have we done to you? What motive can you have for going away? Come back we conjure you," and as no one knows very well which way the soul is gone, they run in all directions, and make a thousand evolutions in the hope of meeting it, and softening it by their prayers and tears.

If these mild and insinuating methods do not succeed, if the soul remains deaf, and persists coolly in going its own way, they adopt another course, and try and frighten it. They utter loud cries, they let off fireworks suddenly in every direction in which they imagine it might be making off; they stretch out their arms to bar its passage, and push with their hands to force it to return home and re-enter the body. Amongst those who set out on the chase after a refractory soul, there are always some more skilful than others, who manage to get upon its track. Then they summon the others to help them, calling out, "Here it is! here it is!" and immediately every body runs that way. They then unite their forces, they concentrate their plan of operations, they weep, they groan, they lament, they let off squibs and crackers of all kinds, they make a frightful *charivari* round the poor soul, and hustle it about in all sorts of ways, so that if it does not give it up at last, it must really be a most stubborn and ill-disposed spirit.

When they are setting out on this strange errand they never fail to take lanterns with them in order to light the soul on its way back, and take away any pretence

it might make of not being able to find it. These ceremonies mostly take place during the night, because, say the Chinese, the soul is in the habit of taking advantage of the darkness to slip away. This opinion seems to be somewhat akin to that expressed by M. de Maistre, in his *Soirées de Saint Petersbourg*:—"The night air is not good," he says, "for the physical man. The animals teach us this, when they all seek a shelter in the night; our maladies teach us this, by raging most during the night. Why do you in the morning send to ask how a sick friend has passed the night, rather than in the evening to know how he has passed the day? It must be because there is something bad in the night."

In the Garden of the Western Gate there was, as we have already said, a fine pagoda dedicated to Buddha, of whom a gilt statue stood on the altar. The gate of this temple was open day and night, and the relations, friends and servants of the patient were continually passing through it, and before the statue of Buddha; but no one of them ever stopped to say a prayer, to burn incense, or to implore the cure of him who seemed so dear to all; this was because these people were really without faith or religion; they did not seem to have any suspicion of the existence of an all-powerful Being, the master of life and death, who holds in his hands the destinies of all men.

All they knew was that when a person was in danger of death, it was customary to run this way and that in pursuit of his soul, and try to bring it back, and they adopted this practice simply to do as others did, without ever asking whether the custom was reasonable or absurd, and probably also without having any great confidence in it themselves.

The whole night long we were kept awake by these extraordinary manœuvres of the poor Chinese for the arrest of the fugitive soul of their dying relative. Now and then they stopped under our windows, and we heard them addressing to it such strange burlesque supplications, that the scene would have been perfectly amusing and laughable, if we had not known that a numerous family was overwhelmed by grief, and in momentary expectation of a cruel domestic calamity. Absurd as it was, there was something heartrending in hearing the voice of that old man and those little children, calling with loud cries on the soul of a father and a son.

On the following morning, as we were going towards the apartments of the sorrowing family, in the hope of being able to speak some words of consolation to them, we were met by a servant, who informed us that the sick man had just died.

The Chinese have a number of circumlocutory phrases to indicate the fact. They say the person exists no more, he has "saluted the age," he has "thanked the world," he has "ascended to the sky," &c. all so many expressions, more or less elegant, to be employed according to the quality of the individual of whom you speak. When the question is of the Emperor, they say he has "fallen or given away," for the death of the head of the Empire is regarded as so immense a catastrophe, that it can only be comparable to the fall of a mountain.

We soon saw persons going to and coming from the house of the deceased, clothed in habits of mourning, that is to say wearing caps and girdles of white linen. For complete mourning the dress must be altogether white, even to the shoes, and the little silk cord with

which the hair is plaited and knotted up. Chinese customs being always in opposition to those of Europe, as we wear black, they of course will wear white.

It is the custom in China to keep the dead a very long time in the house, sometimes even to the anniversary of their decease. In the meanwhile the body is placed in a coffin of extraordinary thickness, and covered with quick-lime, so that it does not occasion any inconvenience in the house. The object of this practice is to do honour to the dead, and give time for preparation for the funeral. His burial is the most important affair, one may say, in the life of a Chinese, the object of his most anxious solicitude. Death is a mere trifle; no one troubles himself much about that, but the quality of the coffin, the ceremonies of the funeral, the choice of a burial-place, and the spot where the grave is to be dug, all that is matter of serious consideration. When the death takes place these cares of course are left as a legacy to his relations. Vanity and ostentation certainly have much to do with these things; every one wishes to perform the ceremony in grand style, so as to create a sensation in the country, and outdo his neighbours. To obtain the funds necessary for such a display some management is often necessary, but people are not alarmed at the most extravagant expenses; they do not shrink from the most enormous sacrifices; they will even sell their property, and occasionally ruin the family outright, rather than not have a fine funeral. Confucius did not enjoin all these foolish excesses, in the fulfilment of an imaginary duty of filial piety, but he did advise people to devote as much as the half of their worldly property to the interment of their parents. The reigning dynasty has endeavoured to check these

exorbitant and useless expenses, but the laws made concerning them appear to affect only the Mantchoos; the Chinese continue to follow their ancient customs.

After the body has been placed in the coffin, the relations and friends assemble at certain appointed hours, to weep together, and express their sorrow. We have often been present at these funeral ceremonies, in which the Chinese display with marvellous facility their really astonishing talents for dissimulation. The men and women assemble in separate apartments, and until the time comes at which it is settled they are to grieve, they smoke, drink tea, gossip, laugh, all with such an air of careless enjoyment that you can hardly persuade yourself that they are really supposed to be a company of mourners. But when the ceremony is about to begin, the nearest relation informs the assembly that the time has come, and they go and place themselves in a circle round the coffin. On this signal the noisy conversation that has been going on suddenly ceases, the lamentations begin, and the faces but now so gay and good-humoured instantly assume the most doleful and lugubrious expression.

The most pathetic speeches are addressed to the dead; every one speaks his own monologue on the subject, interrupted by groans and sobs, and, what is most extraordinary, inconceivable indeed, by tears,—yes, actually real true tears, and plenty of them.

One would suppose they were unconsolable in their grief—and yet they are nothing more than skilful actors—and all this sorrow and lamentation is only a display of histrionic talent. At a given signal the whole scene changes abruptly, the tears dry up, the

performers do not even stop to finish a sob or a groan, but they take their pipes, and lo, there are again these incomparable Chinese, laughing, gossipping, and drinking tea. Certainly no one could guess that, instead of drinking hot tea, they had but a moment before been shedding hot tears.

When the time comes for the women to range themselves round the coffin, the dramatic piece is, if possible, played with still greater perfection. The grief has such an appearance of sincerity, the sighs are so agonising, the tears so abundant, the voice so broken by sobs, that actually, in spite of your certainty that the whole affair is a purely fictitious representation, you can hardly help being affected at it.

The Chinese do not fail to turn to account in many circumstances this astonishing talent for going distracted in cold blood, and pouring from their eyes a quantity of water, so-called tears, that come from one knows not where. What is also very strange is, that, although they are all acquainted with these insinuating artifices, they are sometimes caught by them, and reciprocally cheated. It is, however, with strangers that they obtain their most brilliant successes. Missionaries newly arrived in China, who have not yet had time to become acquainted with their wonderfully flexible natures, capable of taking by turns, and at will, the expression of the most opposite sentiments, imagine they have to do with people of the profoundest sensibility, the most impressible in the world; but they soon discover that the tears of the Chinese are no more to be relied on than their words, and are for the most part purely fictitious. Cordiality and sincerity are qualities rare indeed among the Chinese.

The rich inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, it is almost needless to say, make an exorbitant display at funerals. They invite as many relations and friends as they can, in order to muster an imposing procession, and the mourning dresses worn by the whole party are at the cost of the family of the deceased, who are also bound to provide them for several days together with splendid repasts. A great number of musicians are hired for the occasion, and also of *weepers*, for though most people in China are, as we have said, pretty well skilled in the art of shedding tears, there exist mourners, by profession, who have carried it to still greater perfection, and are absolutely inimitable at sobs and groans. They follow the coffin, in long white robes, hempen girdles, and dishevelled hair; and their lamentations are accompanied by the beating of gongs, by the sharp and discordant sounds of rude instruments of music, and the discharge of fireworks. The sudden explosion and the smell of the powder are supposed to be efficacious in frightening away the demons and hindering them from seizing on the soul of the defunct, which never fails to follow the coffin; and as these malevolent spirits have also the reputation of being extremely covetous, and fond of money, people endeavour to get on their weak side. They let fall, for this purpose, all along the road, sapecks and bank-notes, that the wind carries away in all directions; and as the demons in China are by no means as cunning as the men, they are taken in by this device, and fall into the trap with charming simplicity, though the supposed bank-notes are in fact only bits of white paper. Whilst they are engaged in pursuing these deceitful appearances of riches, the soul of the defunct proceeds quietly and

comfortably after its coffin without any danger of being stopped by the way.

The sceptical Chinese are in general quite willing to dispense with the attendance of Bonzes, or Tao-sse, at their funerals. Not having felt any need of religion during their lives, they argue, very logically, that they certainly do not want it after they are dead. The disciples of Confucius especially could hardly admit the necessity of offering prayers and sacrifices for the departed, when they profess to believe that man dies altogether, that the soul vanishes as well as the body, and falls into nothingness. But the Bonzes, nevertheless, are occasionally invited to funerals, on account of the greater pomp that their presence confers. We witnessed ourselves, in the environs of Peking, the funeral of a great dignitary of the Empire, at which were present all the Bonzes, Lamas, and Tao-sse that could be collected from the whole country round, and they each said their own prayers, and performed their own ceremonies. It was a realisation of the famous formula, San-kiao-y-kiao—the three religions are one.

The Chinese are in the habit of offering viands, and sometimes splendid banquets, to their dead; and these are served before the coffin, as long as the body is kept in the family, and on the tomb after the burial.

What idea is really in the minds of the Chinese on the subject of this practice? Many people have thought and written that the souls of the departed are supposed to take pleasure in regaling themselves with the subtle and delicate parts, the essences as they might be called, of the dishes offered to them; but it seems to us that the Chinese are far too intelligent to carry absurdity to such a point as this. The masses, no doubt,

observe these practices quite mechanically, without ever thinking of the meaning of them ; but for those who are in the habit of reflecting upon what they do, it is impossible to believe they can delude themselves so grossly.

How, for instance, could the Confucians, who believe the complete annihilation of both soul and body, suppose that the dead come back to eat ? One day we asked a Mandarin, a friend of ours, who had just offered a sumptuous repast at the tomb of a deceased colleague, whether, in his opinion, the dead stood in need of food ?

“How could you possibly suppose I had such an idea ?” he replied, with the utmost astonishment. “Could you really suppose me so stupid as that ?”

“But what then is the purpose of these mortuary repasts ?”

“We intend to do honour to the memory of our relations and friends ; to show that they still live in our remembrance, and that we like to serve them as if they were yet with us. Who could be absurd enough to believe that the dead need to eat ? Amongst the lower classes, indeed, many fables are current, but who does not know that rude ignorant people are always credulous ?”

We are inclined to think that all tolerably well informed Chinese, a little accustomed to reflection, would be of the same opinion as this Mandarin, with respect to the practices to which the multitude may possibly attach superstitious ideas.

The worship of ancestors, which formerly occasioned such long and deplorable disputes between the Jesuit missionaries and the Dominicans may, perhaps, be regarded in the same light as the offerings to the dead. The Chinese have always been in the habit of reserving

in the interior of their houses an apartment dedicated to the honour of their forefathers. Among the princes, the great Mandarins, and all who are rich enough to have numerous chambers in their houses, it is a kind of domestic sanctuary, in which are kept tablets inscribed with the names of ancestors, from him who is counted as the founder of the family, down to the most recently dead. Sometimes there is only the name of the founder, as he is supposed to represent all the others. To this sanctuary the members of the family go to perform certain ceremonies prescribed by the Rites; to burn perfumes, present offerings, and make prostrations. They go there also whenever there is any important enterprise in agitation, any favour received, or any misfortune suffered. They go, in fact, to inform their ancestors of whatever of good or evil happens to their descendants. The poor, and those who have no more room in their houses than is strictly necessary to lodge the living, merely put their ancestors in a corner of their room, or on a shelf. Formerly, even in time of war, the general had in his tent a place set apart for the tablets of his ancestors, and at the commencement of a siege, on the eve of a battle, or whenever any important event seemed impending, he proceeded, at the head of his principal officers, to prostrate himself before the tablets, and make to his ancestors a report concerning the situation of his affairs.

These customs were tolerated by some of the missionaries, who saw in them merely acts of civil homage rendered to the memory of the dead; but they were severely reprov'd by others, who found in these ceremonies all the characteristics of idolatrous worship. Thence arose those lamentable contests which at this epoch so com-

pletely paralysed the missions. The question was really difficult of solution. Neither the partisans nor the opponents of the rites practised in honour of ancestors and of Confucius, doubted that their opinion was supported by irrefragable proofs; the quarrel became embittered, and it seemed as if, henceforward, peace and harmony would no longer exist among these infant Christian communities. But Rome, that tribunal sovereign and infallible in the eyes of every good Catholic, cut short the dispute, condemned the worship of ancestors and of Confucius, and took effectual measures to prevent the recurrence of these unfortunate dissensions, that had proved more injurious to the missions in China than the violent persecutions of the Mandarins.

The ordinary duration of mourning for a father or mother is three years; but this has been reduced to twenty-seven months for the functionaries of the Government. During this time of mourning, a Chinese cannot perform the duties of any public office. A Mandarin is obliged to quit his post, a minister of state to renounce the administration of affairs, and live wholly in retirement. He must pay no visits, and his official relations with the world are completely suspended. Once at least every year he must perform a commemorative ceremony at the tombs of his ancestors, in which all the descendants of the family, men, women, and children, take part. They clean the place of burial, and, after having decorated the ground with numerous cuttings of coloured paper, they make the prostrations prescribed by the ceremonial, burn perfumes, and deposit on the turf or the tombstone little vases, containing more or less exquisite culinary dainties. However profound may be the scepticism of the modern Chinese, it is probable that these

practices were once based upon some kind of belief in a future life. "Almost all men," says Bossuet, "sacrifice to the manes, that is, the souls of their ancestors, by which we see how ancient is the faith in the immortality of the soul, and that it may be classed among the earliest traditions of the human race."

In all these ordinances concerning funerals, mourning sacrifices before the tablets, and at the tombs of ancestors, it is easy to see the consecration of the one grand principle of filial piety, which is the basis of Chinese society. There are indeed scarcely any customs that, when closely looked into, will not be seen to tend to the inculcation of respect for paternal authority in the minds of the people. This purpose is also especially evident in the numerous ceremonies connected with marriage. We will enter into some details concerning this matter, and it will be seen what an immense part paternal power plays in the laws and manners of the Empire.

It is an indisputable fact that in China fathers and mothers, or, in their absence, grand parents, or, in fact, the nearest relations, have a completely arbitrary authority over young persons in the affairs of marriage, from which they cannot withdraw themselves. The Chinese now marry very young, though this appears to be contrary to the usages of antiquity, and the prescriptions of the Book of Rites. This canonical book establishes in the following manner the division of the ages of man:—

"Man, at the age of ten, has a brain as weak as his body, and can at most only apply to the first elements of the sciences. Man at twenty has not yet his full strength; he scarcely perceives the first rays of reason. Nevertheless, as he begins to be a man, one ought to allow him the manly hat. At thirty, man is truly man;

robust and vigorous ; and this is the age that is suitable for marriage. To a man of forty, small magistracies may be entrusted ; and to a man of fifty, the most difficult and extensive employments. At sixty, men grow old, and little remains to them but prudence without vigour, so that they ought not to do anything themselves, but merely to say what they wish to have done. A man of seventy, whose strength of mind and body is exhausted, should leave domestic cares to his children. The decrepid age is that of eighty or ninety years ; men at that time of life are like children, no longer subject to the laws ; and if they reach a hundred, they need occupy themselves with nothing more than in fanning the feeble flame of life that yet remains to them."

According to the Book of Rites, therefore, venerable antiquity was of opinion that the age of thirty was the most suitable for marriage ; but the Chinese at the present day—more precocious, probably—have abandoned this ancient custom. Nothing is more common than to arrange a marriage during the infancy of the parties, or even before their birth. Two friends make a solemn promise, or even take an oath, to unite in marriage the children of different sexes that may be born to them ; and the solemnity of the engagement is marked by their tearing reciprocally a piece out of their tunics, and giving it to each other. Marriages contracted in this manner cannot, of course, be founded on congeniality of character ; this can seldom happen, as the parties have not usually seen each other beforehand ; the will of the parent being the sole reason for the formation of the nuptial tie.

In a Chinese marriage, not only does the bride bring with her no dowry, but her parents expect to receive a

sum of money, which is stipulated for in advance. One part of it is paid as earnest money as soon as the contract is signed; the other, some days before the celebration of the wedding. Besides this, the parents of the bridegroom make presents to those of the bride of silk stuffs, rice, fruit, wine, &c. If these presents and the earnest money have been received, the contract is concluded, and neither party can draw back. Although the wife has no wedding portion, it is customary for the parents to bestow on her, out of pure liberality, a more or less considerable *trousseau*, and it sometimes happens that the father-in-law sends for the young husband into his house, and constitutes him heir to a portion of his property. But he cannot avoid leaving the rest to some one of his own family and name, who may perform the rites and ceremonies before the tablets of his ancestors. This practice is, in the eyes of the Chinese, of so much importance, that it has even given occasion to adoptions. A man who has no male descendants adopts, or, rather, buys a child, who afterwards recognises no other parent. It then takes his name, and at his death wears mourning like a son. If it happens that the father has children of his own after the adoption, it still remains in force, and the adopted child has a right to an equal portion of the property with the other children.

All marriages are made by mediators for both parties, who undertake gratuitously all the negotiations and preparations. It is even considered as an honour to fulfil such a delicate duty.

Polygamy is not, we believe, really a legal institution in China. Formerly, it was only permitted to Mandarins and men of forty years of age who had no children, to

take secondary, or, as the phrase is, "little wives." The Book of Rites even prescribes the punishments to be inflicted for the transgression of this law. "A man guilty of concubinage," it says, "shall be punished with a hundred blows on the shoulders." But these laws subsist only in the books, and a man may, in fact, take a secondary wife whenever he pleases. His fancy has no other limits to observe than those of his fortune, and does not always observe even those.

But whatever may be the number of secondary wives, there can never be but one legitimate spouse, who is the mistress of the house, and to whom all the others are subordinate.

The children born of these secondary wives acknowledge the legitimate one only as their mother; wear mourning for her instead of their real mother, and lavish on her all their expressions of respect, affection, and obedience. The secondary wife is so entirely inferior and dependent, that she must obey the lawful wife in everything; and she never calls the head of the house by any other name than that of father of the family.

The secondary wife is never permitted to abandon her husband for any cause whatever. She is simply the property of him who has purchased her; but the husband may repudiate her, drive her out of his house, or sell her if he thinks proper; there is no law to forbid it. "If," says the code, "a man shall send away his lawful wife without reason, the law will oblige him to take her back again, and he shall receive eighty blows of the stick;" but the law says nothing of the "little wife," and this silence authorises the Chinese to treat her according to his caprice.

When the Chinese contracts a lawful marriage he is

perfectly aware that he is forming an indissoluble tie, and the written laws of the Empire are in harmony with the general conviction. They impose severe punishments on married persons who openly neglect their duties. They admit indeed of divorce in several cases, but all legislation on this subject is wholly in favour of the husband. As in all pagan societies, the woman is always the slave or victim of the man. The law seldom troubles itself about her, but if ever it does mention her, it is but to remind her of the inferiority of her condition, and that she is only in this world to obey and to suffer.

Amongst the obstacles to marriage recognised by the law, there are some rather remarkable ones which concern magistrates. A Mandarin, for example, is forbidden to form an alliance in the province where he holds any public employment. If a civil Mandarin (military officers are exempt) marries or even takes a secondary wife in the country where he is magistrate, he is condemned to eighty blows with the stick, and the marriage is declared null and void. If he marry the daughter of a man concerned in a lawsuit that he is to decide, the number of strokes is doubled, and in these two cases, the mediators receive the same punishment. The woman is sent back to her parents, and the nuptial presents are confiscated to the public treasury. We will not enter into long details of the ceremonies and formalities observed in the celebration of marriage. There are six principal rites, but they are all observed only among families of importance; the greater part of them are dispensed with among people of inferior condition. The first rite consists in agreeing on the alliance; the second, in asking the name of the young

lady, and the month and day of her birth, for Chinese etiquette requires that she should be, at this stage of the treaty, absolutely unknown to her future husband; the third thing to be done, is to consult diviners concerning the result of the marriage, and to report a happy augury to the parents of the girl; the fourth to offer silk stuffs and other presents, as pledges of the intention to form the connexion; the fifth to appoint the wedding day; and the sixth to go and meet the bride, and conduct her to the house of her husband. The accomplishment of these rites is accompanied in both families by a crowd of minute observances from which no one would dare to depart. The formula of the missives that they address to each other, the words that they employ, the particular salutations to be used, all is previously determined, according to the rules of the most exquisite politeness. The part, however, which is played in all these ceremonies by the family of the bride, must always wear a certain stamp of deference and modesty. Thus, when the name of his daughter is asked, the father is required to answer in the following manner:—“I have received with respect the marks of your goodness. The choice that you deign to make of my daughter to become the wife of your son, shows me that you esteem my *poor and cold family* more than it deserves. My daughter is coarse and stupid, and I have not had the talent to bring her up well; yet I shall nevertheless glory in obeying you on this occasion. You will find written on another page the name of my daughter, and that of her mother, with the day of her birth.” When he receives the presents, and the information that a day is fixed for the wedding, the father replies in these terms:—“I have received your last resolution. You

wish this marriage to take place, and I am only sorry that my daughter has so little merit, and that she has not had all the education desirable. I fear she is good for nothing, yet nevertheless, since the augury is favourable, I dare not disobey you. I accept your present, I salute you, and I consent to the day appointed for the wedding. I will take care to make due preparation."

On the day marked for the celebration, the bridegroom puts on a magnificent dress, and when the family has assembled in the domestic sanctuary, he kneels down, and prostrates his face to the ground. Perfumes are then burnt before the tablets of ancestors, and the important event is announced to them. The master of the ceremonies then invites the father to take a place on the seat prepared for him. As soon as he is seated, the bridegroom receives on his knees a cup of wine, of which he first pours a few drops on the earth by way of libation, and before drinking makes four genuflexions before his father; afterwards he advances towards the seat, and receives the commands of his father in a kneeling posture. The father says: "Go, my son, go and seek your wife, and behave in all things with prudence and wisdom." The son, prostrating himself four times before his father, replies that he will obey; after which he enters a palanquin that is already waiting at the door. His friends, and a numerous array of attendants, march before him, bearing lanterns of the most brilliant colours, a custom that arose at a time when it was usual to celebrate marriages in the night. When he has reached the house of the bride, the bridegroom waits at the gate of the second court until his father-in-law comes to introduce him.

In the house of the bride similar ceremonies are observed. After the libation and the drinking of the cup of wine, the bride kneels down before her father, who exhorts her to obey faithfully the commands of her father and mother-in-law, and then the mother places a garland on her head, whence hangs a large veil that covers her face. "Take courage, daughter," she says, "and be always submissive to the will of your husband."

They then proceed solemnly to meet the bridegroom, who is waiting at the entrance of the second court. The procession advances, and when it has reached the middle of the court, the bridegroom kneels down, and offers a wild duck to his father-in-law, which the master of the ceremonies carries to the bride. At length the bridal pair meet for the first time; and they salute each other very gravely, making a profound inclination, and then they kneel down together to "adore the heavens and the earth." It would seem that this act is the essential point of the ceremony, and in some measure the symbol of the conjugal tie. When they wish to express that any one is married, they commonly say, "he has adored the heavens and the earth."

After they have remained a short time on their knees the bride is conducted to a palanquin covered with rose-coloured silk; the bridegroom also enters his palanquin, and the procession moves away, considerably augmented in number, for besides the lantern bearers aforesaid, there come now people carrying beds, chairs, tables, and all kinds of household utensils. When it has once more reached the house of the bridegroom he alights, and invites his bride to enter, but marches before her to the interior court, where the nuptial feast is prepared. Then the bride raises her veil and salutes her husband,

and he salutes her in his turn, and they both wash their hands, the husband on the north, the wife on the south side of the portico. Before sitting down to table the wife makes four genuflexions before her husband, who responds with two to her, and they sit down opposite one another. Before eating and drinking, they make a libation with wine, and put aside some viands to be offered to the ancestors.

They then taste of some of the dishes in profound silence; the husband rises, invites his wife to drink, and sits down again, and the wife performs the same ceremony with respect to her husband, and at the same time two full cups of wine are brought, of which they drink a part, and then put what remains into one cup to drink it between them. The father of the bridegroom in the meantime is giving his friends a grand banquet in a neighbouring apartment, and the mother of the bride another to the women invited. For them the entire day is one long festival, in which the time passes with a little more spirit and gaiety, than it does with the newly-married pair.

On the following day, the wife, clothed in her bridal attire, and accompanied by her husband, and a mistress of the ceremonies, carrying two pieces of silk stuff, goes into the second court of the house, in which her father and mother-in-law are seated at separate tables, awaiting her visit.

The newly-married pair salute them and make four prostrations before them, after which the husband retires into a neighbouring apartment, and the wife makes her offerings. The rest of that day and several following ones are employed in paying visits. The wife has to pay her respects to all the relations of her husband,

and perform genuflexions before them ; and the husband to present himself in the same manner to the relations of his wife.

Such is, briefly, the ceremonial of a Chinese marriage ; and we have observed that every one in China professes great respect for this solemn act of a man's life. When a marriage procession, be it of rich or poor people, passes by, you must stand aside for it ; even Mandarins of the highest rank stop, with all their attendants, and if they are on horseback, politeness requires them to descend, and do honour to the newly-married pair.

It appears somewhat unnecessary to add that Chinese marriages are seldom happy, and peace and harmony do not often reign in the interior of a family. Without mentioning the numerous causes of jealousy and discord that must arise from the presence of several secondary wives in the same house, it must evidently be a surprising chance if a pair, who have never seen each other before marriage, should really prove congenial. Incompatibility of character frequently manifests itself soon enough, and thence arises aversion and even sometimes bitter hatred. Perpetual quarrels, conflicts, and even sanguinary battles, take place, in which the woman is almost always the sufferer. Privations of every kind, and of every day ; invectives, curses ; from time to time also blows ; these are her heritage, which she must endure with patience. In some parts of the country it is so much the fashion to beat a wife, that a man would hardly like not to follow it, as to show himself negligent on this point, would be to forfeit his marital dignity, and proclaim himself a simpleton, who understood nothing of his prerogatives.

One day we were witnesses of a terrible scene in a

Chinese family that we knew intimately. On coming in we found a numerous party assembled round a young woman, who appeared on the point of yielding her last breath. A few days before she had been the very image of health, but now she was scarcely recognisable, her face was so bruised and covered with blood. She could not move or speak, but her eyes streaming with tears, and the violent beating of her heart, indicated too well what she was suffering. We asked for some explanation of this heart-rending spectacle. "It is her husband," said the bystanders, "who has brought the poor creature to this state." The husband was standing there gloomy, silent, almost stupefied, his eyes fixed upon his unfortunate victim.

"What motive," said we, "could possibly have urged you to such a dreadful excess? What crime has your wife committed to be treated in this way?"

"None, none!" he cried in a voice broken by sobs. "She never deserved any punishment; we have only been married two years, and you know we have always lived in peace. But for some days I have had something on my mind. I thought people were laughing at me, because I had never beaten my wife; and this morning I gave way to a bad thought." And the young man, whom we could never have suspected of such a piece of insanity, abandoned himself to tardy and useless remorse. Two days afterwards the poor woman, who had always been an angel of goodness, expired in terrible convulsions.

In some cases, pecuniary interest is the only motive capable of restraining within some limits the harshness of the Chinese towards their wives. When they do treat them with gentleness and moderation, it is usually

on a principle of economy, as you might spare a beast of burden because it costs money, and because if you killed it, you would have to replace it. This hideous calculation is by no means a mere supposition of ours. In a large village to the north of Peking, we were once witnesses of a violent quarrel between a husband and wife. After having for a long time abused each other in the most furious manner, and even hurled at each other some tolerably inoffensive projectiles, their anger still increasing they began to break everything in the house. Several of the neighbours tried in vain to restrain them, and at length the husband seizing a great paving-stone from the court-yard, rushed furiously into the kitchen, where the wife was expending her wrath upon the crockery, and strewing the floor with the ruins. When the husband rushed in with the paving-stone, everybody hurried forward to prevent a calamity that seemed imminent—there was no time—but the fellow dashed his paving-stone, not against his wife fortunately, but against his great cast-iron kettle, which he stove in with the blow. The wife could not out-do this piece of extravagance, and so the quarrel ceased. A man who was standing by, then said, laughing, to the husband, “You are a fool, my elder brother; why didn’t you break your wife’s head with the stone, instead of your kettle? Then you would have had peace in your house.”

“I thought of that,” replied the kind husband coolly; “but it would have been foolish. I can get my kettle mended for two hundred sapecks, and it would have cost me a great deal more to buy another wife.” Such an answer will not be in the least surprising to any one who knows the Chinese.

The women of the Celestial Empire are so unfortunate, that in many places their sufferings in this life have suggested to them the hope of a future one. It is most painful to see these poor victims of a sceptical and corrupt civilisation, vainly struggling amidst their sufferings to find some consolation, and, for want of a knowledge of Christianity, throwing themselves into the extravagances of the metempsychosis. They have formed a sect called the "Abstinent," which is increasing rapidly in the southern provinces. The women who enrol themselves in this sisterhood make a vow to eat neither meat nor fish, nor anything that has had life, but to live wholly on vegetables. They think that after death their souls will migrate into another body, and that if they have been faithful to their vows of abstinence, they will have the happiness to return to life as men. The hope of obtaining such an advantage supports them under their daily mortifications, and enables them to endure the troubles and hardships they have to suffer from the other sex. They promise themselves, doubtless, ample compensation after their metamorphosis; and it would not be, perhaps, a very hazardous conjecture, that some of them enjoy a little the idea of the vengeance they will take on their husbands, when they shall be transformed into women.

At various periods of the year this sisterhood goes in procession to certain pagodas. We have met them several times, and it was truly pitiable to see the poor women, leaning on sticks, and hobbling along on their little goat's feet, to make long pilgrimages, in the hope that after their death they will be able to take a good revenge on the men for all their present wrongs.

CHAP. VII.

DEPARTURE FROM THE CAPITAL OF HOU-PÉ. — FAREWELL VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE TOWN. — BURIAL OF THE TWO MARTYRS. — STATE OF CHRISTIANITY IN HOU-PÉ. — DISAGREEABLE INCIDENTS ON THE ROAD. — NO PROVISIONS IN A TOWN OF THE THIRD ORDER. — VISIT TO THE PALACE OF THE TOWN PREFECT. — TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS. — HORRIBLE DETAILS OF A TRIAL. — THE KOUAN-KOUEN, OR CHINESE BANDIT. — MODE OF ADMINISTERING JUSTICE. — CODE OF LAWS. — GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS UPON CHINESE LEGISLATION. — PENAL AND MATERIALISTIC CHARACTER OF THE CODE. — DEFECT OF PRECISION IN CERTAIN LAWS. — PRINCIPLE OF SOLIDARITY. — LAWS RELATING TO OFFICERS OF GOVERNMENT. — ORGANISATION OF THE FAMILY. — REPRESSION OF CRIME. — RITUAL LAWS. — TAXES AND TERRITORIAL PROPERTY.

AFTER four days' rest in the Garden of the Western Gate, we began to think of resuming our seemingly interminable journey. We felt our strength and courage nearly exhausted, and we had still nearly nine hundred miles to travel, and that during the hottest season of the year, and constantly in a southerly direction. But trusting in the protection of Providence, we did not doubt of arriving some day safe and sound at Macao.

The preparations for our departure were made; our old palanquins somewhat disfigured by the dust, and calcined by the scorching of the sun, were varnished and furbished up anew; the new escort was regularly organised under the command of Master Lieou, the

“Weeping Willow,” and our domestic Wei-chan had begun the education of our future travelling companions. He had insinuated to them, in his picturesque and figurative language, that it would be necessary for them to bend often, in order not to graze themselves against certain angular points in our character.

Before finally quitting the capital of Hou-pé, we went to salute his Excellency the Governor of the province, who received us with ceremonious politeness. His language and manners had nothing of the benevolence and affability that had excited a feeling of love for the venerable and excellent Pao-hing, the Viceroy of the province of Sse-tchouen. On our side, we contented ourselves with behaving courteously, and strictly observing the regulations of the ritual. “Travel in peace,” said he, waving his hand. “Remain seated in tranquillity,” we responded, and with a bow, not very profound, we departed.

We had not quitted the large and populous town of Ou-tchang-fou, at the utmost, above an hour, when we entered a mountainous country, of which the soil was of a reddish colour, and furrowed in all directions by narrow paths. We had a vague recollection of having seen it before, and on consideration we thought we must have passed through some of the windings of its numerous hills when, in the beginning of the year 1840, we had for the first time, and in a furtive manner, traversed the Chinese Empire. This remembrance plunged us into a sweet though sad reverie, and in order to be quite sure that we were not mistaken, we inquired of one of the palanquin bearers what was the name of the country we were traversing? *Houng-chan,*

he replied, "the Red Mountain." Yes, that was it! That name was profoundly impressed on our memory!

In passing along a narrow road bordered with thorny shrubs, that were interlaced by numerous climbing plants, we perceived at a little distance, on the declivity of a hill, two modest tombstones, placed side by side. The sight filled our hearts with emotion, and our eyes with tears. Beneath these two stones repose the precious remains of two spiritual sons of St. Vincent de Paul, the venerable Clet and Perboyre, martyred for the faith, the one in 1822, the other in 1839. Oh, how great a consolation would it have been to have stopped for awhile, to have knelt, to have prostrated ourselves by these family tombs, and have kissed the ground consecrated by the blood of these martyrs, and prayed to God, in the name of these strong-hearted men, these heroes of the faith, for a little of the intrepidity that is always necessary amidst the tribulations of the world! for whatever may be the part that the will of God has assigned to us here below, we are all children of Calvary, and have need of some portion of the martyr's spirit.

Prudence, however, did not permit us to stop. There would have been danger in pointing out this sacred treasure to the numerous persons who accompanied us.

In 1840, when we visited these dear tombs, we were alone with a young Christian of Ou-tchang-fou, who served us for a guide, and this is what we wrote at the time to our brethren in France:—

"The precious remains of MM. Clet and Perboyre repose side by side on a green hill, at a short distance from the town of Ou-tchang-fou. Oh, how delightful was the hour I passed near these simple but covered

mounds. Upon an idolatrous soil, in the midst of the Chinese Empire, a feeling of rapturous happiness hitherto unknown seemed to fill and dilate my soul. No chiselled marble covers the bones of these two glorious children of St. Vincent de Paul, but God Himself seems to have undertaken the care of their mausoleum. Parasitical plants and thorny shrubs, resembling the acacia, grow around it; and above the carpet of verdure that covers it, rise in elegant profusion the beautiful blossoms of the mimosa. As we contemplated these brilliant flowers, escaping from a thick network of thorns, we thought involuntarily of the glory with which the sufferings of martyrs are crowned in heaven."

The two tombs were exactly in the same state as when we left them: both the stones and their inscriptions appeared to us to be untouched; only the season for the flowers was past, and the mimosas no longer displayed their bright corollas amidst the leaves. The grass too was withered up, but some stalks of the wild bind-weed, stript of its leaves, crept from one tomb to the other, as if to form a bond between them.

Let us hope that the blood of martyrs, formerly such good seed for Christianity, may not have lost its fertilising power in China. This land has been doubtless hitherto deplorably sterile; but when the hour comes, the hour appointed by Him who is able "from the very stones to raise up children to Abraham," we may see this adamant soil soften, and bring forth countless worshippers of Jesus.

The state of Christianity in Hou-pé is not so flourishing as in the province of Sse-tchouen. At most there are not in it more than 12,000 or 14,000 Christians—

most of them poor, and belonging to the lower classes of society.

The frequent and violent persecutions that have harassed this province may perhaps account for this slow progress of the faith; and the small numbers of the Christians, and the continual vexations they have to endure from the Mandarins, contribute to render them timid, and to repress the ardour and energy necessary for proselytism. While travelling over this province, we always noticed that the Christians kept themselves concealed; they did not dare to show themselves on our passage, we did not receive any visits from them at the Communal Palaces, at most we could only discover them here and there, by their making stealthily the sign of the cross, in order to let us know who they were. We saw no signs of the spirit and activity so perceptible at the missions of Sse-tchouen, and which denoted a more lively faith, or at all events a more ardent zeal for the conversion of the infidels.

The mission of Hou-pé is at present confided to the care of Italian missionaries, under the direction of Monseigneur Rizzolatti, Vicar Apostolic, who has been many years in the missions of China. Under the influence of his long experience, the vicariate of Hou-pé had considerably increased, when unfortunately a persecution separated the pastor from his flock. M. Rizzolatti was arrested, and sent to the English colony at Hong-kong, where he is now waiting till circumstances shall appear sufficiently favourable to permit him, without imprudence, to return to the bosom of his mission.

We travelled the whole day, through a country intersected by hills and ravines, and apparently little adapted to cultivation; we saw few villages, only here and there

a few scattered houses and farms, where by dint of patience and industry, a few families contrive to obtain some small return from the barren soil. Before sunset we arrived at the banks of the Blue River, which we had to cross in order to reach a market town situated on the opposite side. The road that we followed on leaving Ou-tchang-fou ran towards the North-East, and took us farther off Canton, but we were compelled to proceed by this circuitous way to avoid a number of little lakes that would every moment have barred our passage. It was necessary also to take the Imperial road, that would afterwards lead us directly to the capital of Kiang-si. We might have embarked at Ou-tchang-fou, and gone down the Blue River, as far as the great lake Pou-yang, but as that was the season of inundation and tempests, the administration had considered it prudent to send us by land. The route was longer and less agreeable, but there was no fear of shipwreck. After having crossed the Blue River, we halted at a large village, the name of which we have forgotten, but this is no great matter, for we have nothing to say in its favour. We found bad lodgings, a bad supper, and, into the bargain, a frightful quantity of mosquitoes, and a large ill-smelling insect, of the order *coleoptera*, called the *kakkerlac**, which abounds in the warm countries of China, and delights in gnawing the tips of your ears and toes while you sleep.

We were mostly lodged and fed in a deplorable manner, as long as we continued on this cross-road. The Mandarins in their journeys usually follow the course of the Blue River; and the local administration

* This insect is of the genus *Blatta*; and as there is, we believe, no English name for it, we have adopted that used by the Dutch and by sailors. The French name is *Cancerlat*.—Tr.

has not, as elsewhere, erected Communal Palaces from stage to stage, to receive the public functionaries.

We were obliged to lodge at miserable inns — ill kept, and unspeakably dirty — where we had the greatest difficulty in procuring just enough to prevent our dying of hunger. Our conductors did whatever they could for us; the Weeping Willow, who had promised to render our lives so delightful, so poetical, as long as we remained under his care, vainly gave orders to his subordinates — order what he would, his orders produced only the poorest results.

He was excessively distressed, at least we certainly thought his eyes poured out tears more abundantly than usual, but our servant, Wei-chan, was not tearful but furious. As we had kept him in hopes of his being able to manage our affairs well, he felt his honour hurt, and his reputation compromised whenever we did not find, as in Sse-tchouen, a superb Communal Palace, with a splendid banquet ready for us. He got into a passion every moment, insulted the innkeepers, and cursed the whole province of Hou-pé. To hear him, you would have thought the whole town or village deserved to be burnt down, and the inhabitants to be set in the Cangue, or exiled to the end of Bucharia. We were obliged more than once to moderate the extravagance of his zeal, and show him that though we had thought proper to be energetic in claiming our rights, we could also be patient when circumstances required it, and that there was no reason to attribute ill-will to any one. Wei-chan listened attentively to our sermon, but that did not hinder him rating every body he came in contact with. The day before we arrived at the Imperial road, we reached towards noon a town of the third order, called Kouang-

tsi-hien. We were conducted to a tolerably good-looking house, that reminded us a little of the Communal Palaces, and we were expatiating in a cool pleasant garden, beneath the broad leaves of a thick grove of bananas, when the Weeping Willow came towards us, and gazing at us mournfully through his tears and his spectacles, uttered these interesting words: "The guardian of the establishment is only charged to lodge us; the Tribunal told him that he need not provide any victuals!"

"The authorities of the town, then, will attend to us; they will, doubtless, send us dinner from the Tribunal."

"By no means; they told me the Tribunal would have nothing to do with feeding us."

"Who, then, is to undertake it?"

"Nobody!" cried the Willow, piteously, extending his right hand towards us, while with the left he wiped his eyes with a bit of white linen.

"Nobody?" cried we, too, starting up from our seats; "send for our palanquin-bearers, and let them take us to the Prefect of the town."

The Weeper, who was not accustomed to our diplomatic proceedings, was seized with fright, but Wei-chan calmed his fears by telling him that we had behaved in this way all along the road, and that no harm had ever come of it.

The palanquin-bearers arrived, according to order, and we set off for the Prefect's palace. We had desired our men not to stop at the outer gate, but to march boldly in, and our orders were punctually obeyed; but the porter, noticing this unusual mode of entrance into the Tribunal, ran after us to ask where we were going.

"To speak to the Prefect."

“The Prefect is sitting in judgment; there is a trial of the first importance.”

We thought this was only a pretext to prevent our entrance, and we therefore insisted upon going in.

“At least,” said the porter, “give me your visiting card, and I will go and announce you.”

In the fear that the Prefect would not see us if we did, we replied to the porter, that we were not subject to the rites of the Empire, and that we would announce ourselves. We then made a sign to the bearers to go on, and we soon reached the interior court, immediately before the entrance of the principal hall. This court was so full of people, that we thought it probable the first magistrate of the town really was engaged as we had been told. A subaltern officer of the Palace also came up to us just as we alighted from our palanquins, and assured us that the Prefect was then sitting in judgment on a criminal trial. We hesitated for a moment, not knowing very well what to do, whether to return home, or to make our way into the hall where the trial was going on. As we did not at all like having come for nothing, and were moreover somewhat curious to see what was going on, we put aside the crowd and entered.

All eyes were immediately turned towards us, and a movement of surprise was perceptible throughout the assembly. Two men with great beards, yellow caps, and red girdles, formed a very surprising apparition.

For ourselves, at the first glance we cast into the hall, we felt a cold perspiration come over us, and our limbs tottered under us; we were ready to faint. The first object that presented itself on entering this Chinese judgment-hall was the accused—the person on his trial.

He was suspended in the middle of the hall, like one of those lanterns, of whimsical form and colossal dimensions often seen in the great pagodas. Ropes attached to a great beam in the roof held him tied by the wrists and feet, so as to throw the body into the form of a bow. Beneath him stood five or six executioners, armed with rattan rods and leather lashes, in ferocious attitudes, their clothes and faces spotted with blood—the blood of the unfortunate creature, who was uttering stifled groans, while his flesh was torn almost in tatters. The audience present at this frightful spectacle appeared quite at their ease, and our yellow caps excited much more emotion than the spectacle of torture. Many laughed, indeed, at the horror visible in our faces.

The magistrate, to whom our coming had been hastily announced, rose from his seat as soon as he perceived us, and crossed the hall to meet us. As he passed near the executioners, he had to walk on the tips of his toes, and hold up his beautiful silk robes, that they might not be soiled by the pools of half-coagulated blood with which the floor was covered. He saluted us smilingly, and saying he would suspend the proceedings for a moment, conducted us to a small room situated behind the judge's seat. We sat down, or rather we fell, upon a divan, and were some moments before we could recover our composure.

The Prefect of Kouang-tsi-hien was nearly forty years of age ; his features, the tone of his voice, his looks, his manners, all expressed so much mildness and goodness, that we could not recover from our astonishment. It seemed to us impossible that this should be the man who had ordered the frightful measure we had just witnessed ; and so strong a feeling of curiosity took pos-

session of us, that we asked whether we might, without indiscretion, put some questions to him concerning the terrible affair he was then engaged in.

“On the contrary,” he replied, “I should myself desire that you should understand the nature of this trial. You appear to me astonished at the extreme severity I have shown towards the criminal; the torture he is enduring has moved you to compassion. The emotions that agitated your hearts on your entrance into the hall mounted to your faces and became visible to everybody. But this criminal does not merit any consideration; if you knew his conduct, you would certainly not think I was treating him with too much rigour. I am naturally inclined to mildness, and my character is averse from all cruelty. A magistrate, also, must be the father and mother of his people.”

“What great crime, then, has this man committed, to be subjected to so horrible a torture?”

“This man is the chief of a band of ruffians, who for more than a year past have been committing outrages on the Great River, which they were in the habit of traversing night and day in a large boat. He has pillaged a considerable number of merchant junks, and committed more than fifty murders. He has ended by confessing all his crimes, and on this point the truth has been brought to light; but he persists in not denouncing his companions, and I am obliged to employ these extreme methods to reach all the guilty. When one wishes to destroy a tree, it is not sufficient to cut down the trunk, we must tear it up by the roots, otherwise it will sprout forth again.”

The magistrate afterwards related to us some abominable atrocities committed by this gang of robbers; of

their cutting out the tongues and tearing out the eyes of men, women, and children; of their cutting their prisoners to pieces with circumstances of horrible barbarity; such were the amusements in which these monsters in human form indulged on board their vessels. These details, frightful as they were, did not surprise us. Our long residence in China had taught us to what degree the instinct of evil is developed among these people.

The Prefect of Kouang-tsi-hien, to whom we had briefly explained the circumstances that had caused us to commit such an indiscretion as to come and trouble him while he was engaged in his official duties, replied that his having been so much occupied with this affair was the sole cause of the negligence we had to complain of. He added, that we might now return to our lodgings, with the certainty that everything should be arranged in conformity with the Rites; but that for himself, he must now resume his seat, and proceed with the trial.

Although it was late, and we had taken nothing that day but a very slight luncheon, we had very little inclination now to sit down to table. What we had seen and heard since we had entered the judgment-hall had been quite sufficient to take away our appetite. We inquired of the Prefect whether there would be any objection to our being present for a little while at the trial; but our request seemed to surprise, and in some measure embarrass him. After a few minutes' reflection he said, "If you come into the hall, I fear your presence will create some disturbance. The people here have never seen men of the Western countries, and if you come in, the officers of the court will hardly attend to their business. However, if you wish it, you shall remain in this room, and from here it will be easy for you to hear and

see everything, without yourselves being seen by any one."

He then called an attendant, and desired him to open a large window, and let down a bamboo trellis-work; and whilst we took our places behind this grating, the judge returned to the hall, resumed his seat, and the trial went on, after the attendants, executioners, and officers of the court had cried three times, "Let every one be modest and respectful!"

After having rapidly glanced over some pages of a manuscript that was probably some document connected with the trial, the judge ordered a functionary who stood at his left, to ask the prisoner whether he knew a man named Ly-fang, who formerly carried on the trade of a blacksmith, in a village near a place mentioned.

We have already said that the Mandarins not being allowed to hold office in their own province, are seldom sufficiently acquainted with the idiom of the countries where they are placed, not to need an interpreter whenever they have to address a man of the lower class.

The judge's question was therefore translated to the prisoner, who raised a little his head, which had sunk upon his breast, and casting at the judge a look like that of a wild beast, he replied in an insolent tone, that he had heard speak of him. "Do you know him? Have you had any dealings with him?"

"I have heard speak of him; I do not know him."

"How can that be, when this man remained a long while in your boat? Do you persist in uttering a falsehood? Speak the truth. Do you know Ly-fang?"

"I have heard of him; I do not know him."

The Prefect took up from the table a piece of bamboo wood, and threw it into the middle of the court. A

figure was marked upon it, which pointed out the number of blows the prisoner was to receive. One of the executioners picked it up, examined the figure, and cried, in a chanting tone, "Fifteen blows;" that is to say, the criminal would receive thirty — for the executioners always double the number ordered by the judge — and this, multiplied by the number of executioners, furnished a frightful total. There was immediately a stir in the assembly; all eyes were fixed with eager curiosity, sometimes on the miserable prisoner, sometimes on the executioners. Many smiled, and arranged themselves a little more conveniently on their seats, like people about to witness something interesting. The executioners took their places; and soon the body of the criminal was swinging and turning about under a shower of blows, while he uttered terrible shrieks, and his blood spirted out on all sides, and ran down the rattans, reddening the naked arms of the executioners. It was impossible to endure such a spectacle any longer; and we asked one of the officers of the court who had remained with us, whether there was not any way of getting out, without crossing the hall. He urged us, however, strongly to await the end of the trial, in order to see, he said, how they managed to unbind the prisoner. But we had seen quite enough; and the officer had the complaisance to lead us back through a long corridor to the gate where our palanquins were waiting.

"This criminal was a famous *kouan-kouen*," said the officer, as he left us; "are there many *kouan-kouen* in your country?"

"No," we said; "this class of men is unknown among us."

It would not be easy to give a correct translation of this word, kouan-kouen. It is given in China to a race of bandits, who make it a sport and a matter of pride to defy the laws and the magistrates, and commit all kinds of crimes. To give and receive wounds with composure; to kill others with the most perfect coolness; and to have no fear of death for yourself: this is the sublime ideal of the kouan-kouen.

These men are very numerous in China; they form societies among themselves, and stand by each other with immoveable fidelity. Some few live alone, and they are the most ferocious. They regard it as unworthy of their valour to have an associate, or any support whatever, and they rely on nothing but the energy of their own characters. The audacity of these men is incomparable; the most extravagant and atrocious crimes seem to have for them an irresistible attraction. Sometimes they will even go and denounce themselves to the magistrates from a motive of pride. They confess all their crimes, furnish the most irresistible proofs, and demand condemnation; and then, when all the preparations have been made, and when, according to Chinese law, the confession of the culprit is necessary; they deny all that they have said, and endure with incredible stoicism all kinds of torture. It might really be thought they took a pleasure in having their limbs mangled, provided only that they could enrage the Mandarins, and defy the laws. Sometimes they succeed in bringing their judges into difficulties, and even getting them dismissed from their offices; and this is their greatest triumph. In all the towns of China you find numerous collections of little pamphlets, which form in some measure the judicial

records and *causes célèbres* of the Empire. They contain dramatic biographies of the most famous kouan-kouen; and as they cost but a few sapecks, they are eagerly bought and read by the people.

The manner of administering justice in China is extremely summary. It may be said, without exaggeration, that there are four times as many judges in France as in the whole Chinese Empire, but this simplification is by no means favourable to the accused, for whom there is scarcely any protection. His fortune and his life depend almost always on the caprice and rapacity of the Mandarins. The ordinary tribunals have only a single judge; and the prisoner remains on his knees during the whole trial; the judge interrogates him; and he alone decides on the value of the answers given. There is no advocate to undertake his defence; his relations and friends are sometimes admitted to plead for him; but that is a pure condescension on the part of the Mandarin, and dependant on his good pleasure. The position of the witnesses is sometimes almost as bad as that of the accused, for if their depositions do not please the judge, they are liable to be cuffed or whipped whenever he pleases, and an executioner, charged with this duty, always stands beside them in case he should be wanted. The accused is absolutely at the mercy of the Mandarin who is to judge him, or rather indeed of the subaltern officers of the court, who have always drawn up beforehand a statement of the case, favourable or otherwise to the prisoner, according to the money they have received.

Cicero has described, with his energetic eloquence, the mode of proceeding of the infamous Verres, when he held office in Sicily. "The condemned," he says,

“are shut up in prison; the day of their punishment is fixed; but it has already begun in the persons of their unfortunate relatives. Even their children are forbidden to see them; and while the father lies stretched on the ground in his dungeon, they are prevented from bringing him either food or clothing. Desolate mothers have passed whole nights near the fatal gate which prevented them from receiving the last embraces of their children; they have begged as the only favour that they might be permitted to catch the last breath of their sons. But at the gate watches the inexorable jailor, the Prætor’s executioner, the terror and death of our citizens and allies, the Lictor Sestius, who levies a tax upon every groan and pang. ‘You shall give me,’ he says, ‘so much to go in; so much to be allowed to buy food;’ and no suppliant refuses it. ‘And you, how much will you give me for killing your son at a single blow? How much that he may not suffer a long time? How much that I may dispatch him almost without his perceiving it?’ And for these frightful services, too, must the Lictor be paid.”

It has always seemed to us that Verres must have had some knowledge of Chinese customs, so striking is the resemblance between the proceedings of the Mandarins and those of the above-described Prætor of Sicily.

Every condemned criminal has a right to appeal to the superior tribunals, and carry his cause to the sovereign court at Peking; but to reach it so many springs must be set in motion, so many influences brought to bear, that most of the causes are finished in the provinces.

Chinese justice is very severe on thieves and disturbers of the public peace. The most ordinary punishments are fines, the bastinado, blows on the face with

thick leathern soles, the cangue, or portable pillory, the prison, iron cages where the prisoner must remain in a crouching attitude, perpetual or temporary exile into Tartary, and death by strangulation or decapitation. Rebels are cut in pieces, or mutilated in the most horrible manner. Punishments are mostly inflicted in a hasty and arbitrary way, with the exception of the punishment of death, the sentence for which, with a few rare exceptions, must have the ratification of the Emperor.

There exists in China a code, drawn up with very full details, such as European lawyers would call a *corpus* of Chinese law. It is called Ta-tsing Lu-li, that is to say, Laws and Statutes of the grand dynasty of the 'Tsing. It has been translated into English by Sir George Staunton under the title of "Penal Code of China,"—a title that does not at first seem quite accurate, as there are many other things besides criminal law treated of in the course of the work. It is divided into seven portions on the following subjects. 1. General Law; 2. Civil Laws; 3. Fiscal Laws; 4. Ritual Laws; 5. Military Laws; 6. Criminal Laws; 7. Laws concerning public works; but the title of Penal Code, though not literal, is by no means inapplicable.

Those who have observed attentively the manners and institutions of China, have been struck by two things, very fit to attract attention. On the one hand, the generally penal character of the legislation of the Celestial Empire. Every ordinance of the law, every regulation, is made under penal sanction, not only in criminal affairs, but also in matters purely civil. All irregularities, faults of negligence, and so forth, that in European legislation would entail only forfeitures,

incapacities, errors, or some slight civil reparation, are punished in China by a certain number of strokes of the bamboo. It might be interesting to inquire into the cause of this curious characteristic of Chinese law. On the other hand, we find all China, with its official religion, its public and private ceremonial, its political institutions, its police and administration, and its vast population of three hundred millions of men, all governed on the one single principle of filial piety before adverted to; a principle that has been extended to the respect due to the Emperor, and his delegates, and which is in reality little else than the worship of ancient institutions.

Chinese civilisation originates in an antiquity so remote that we vainly endeavour to discover its commencement. There are no traces of the state of infancy among this people. This is a very peculiar fact respecting China. We are accustomed in the history of nations to find some well-defined point of departure, and the historic documents, traditions, and monuments that remain to us generally permit us to follow, almost step by step, the progress of civilisation, to be present at its birth, to watch its development, its onward march, and, in many cases, its subsequent decay and fall. But it is not thus with the Chinese. They seem to have been always living in the same stage of advancement as in the present day; and the data of antiquity are such as to confirm that opinion.

It would not be then very rash to conjecture that some mysterious event of the highest importance must have brought the Chinese suddenly to the point at which we find them, and this fact must have left a profound impression on the imagination of the people.

Thence may proceed the respect, the veneration, the gratitude felt for the first founders of their ancient monarchy, who conducted them in so rapid a manner to a certain state of enlightenment. Thence the worship of ancestors, of all ancient things, of those who hold towards the state the place that the father and mother occupy in the family. The Chinese have in fact always attached the idea of something holy and mysterious to whatever is antique, to all that has existed for ages, and this respect generalised has taken the name of filial piety.

This sentiment, carried to excess, had the necessary consequence of cherishing a sort of exclusive spirit, and a contempt for foreigners, who were regarded as barbarians; and in the second place, a stationary condition of civilisation, which seems to have remained pretty nearly what it was in the beginning.

These reflections enable us to assign to the laws relative to filial piety, political and social, their true importance. As the style is the man, so legislation, which is the style of nations, reflects faithfully the manners, habits, and instincts of the people for and by whom it has been created, and we may say of Chinese legislation, that it represents very accurately the Chinese people.

The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, being wanting in religious faith, and living from day to day without troubling themselves either about the past or the future, profoundly sceptical, and totally indifferent to what touches only the moral nature of man, having no energy for anything but the amassing of sapecks, cannot, as may easily be supposed, be well induced to obey the laws from a sentiment of duty. The official worship of China does not in fact possess any of the

characteristics of what can properly be called a religion, and is, consequently, unable to communicate to the people those moral ideas that do more for the observance of the laws, than the most terrible penal sanctions. It is, therefore, quite natural that the bamboo should be the necessary and indispensable accessory of every legal prescription; and the Chinese law will consequently always assume a penal character, even when it has in view objects purely civil.

Whenever a legislature is compelled to be lavish of punishments, it may certainly be affirmed that the social system in which it is in force is vicious; and the Penal Code of China is an illustration of the truth. The punishments awarded by it are not graduated according to the moral gravity of the crime, considered in itself, but merely on the amount of damage that may be occasioned by it. Thus, the punishment of theft is proportional to the value of the object stolen, according to a scale drawn up expressly to that effect, unless the theft be accompanied by circumstances that bring it under some other head. The penal legislation of China is based on the utilitarian principle; and this need not excite any surprise, for Chinese materialism does not consider the act so much in a moral point of view, as with respect to its consequences.

The presence of this utilitarian principle in legislation usually indicates that the social bond is artificial, that it does not rest on the true principles that constitute and preserve nationalities. The immense population of China, depraved by the absence of religious faith and moral education, wholly absorbed in material interests, would not subsist long as a nation, but would be speedily dismembered, were a system of legislation,

founded on the principles of absolute justice and right, to be suddenly substituted for the strange one that now governs it. Among a nation of speculators and sceptics, like the Chinese, the social bond is found in the penal, not in the moral law, and the rattan and the bamboo form the sole guarantees for the fulfilment of duty.

And even so far the object would not be attained, did not the Mandarins charged with the execution of the laws find in them the greatest possible latitude. This is what explains the vagueness and want of precision so often observable in the penal code of China. Very often the definition of a crime is so obscure and imperfect, that the law becomes completely elastic in the hands of the Mandarin. It really seems to be made expressly to favour their oppressive, shuffling, dishonest propensities; for in the absence of clear and positive texts, they can always find means of bringing within the category of punishable offences acts which, if not perfectly innocent, are at all events such as can never be subjected to positive laws.

Thus, for example, we find in vol. i., page 274, of the Penal Code, the following article: "When a trader, after having observed the nature of his neighbour's business, stocks his shop, and puts prices on his goods in such a manner that his neighbours cannot sell theirs, and thus obtains more than the customary advantage, he shall be punished with forty strokes of the bamboo."

What tradesman could be out of the reach of the vexations of the Mandarins, with such a clause as this always suspended over his head? And here is another still more odious:—

"Whoever shall observe a line of conduct that offends propriety, and that is contrary to the spirit of the laws,

even without any special infraction of any of their enactments, shall be punished with forty blows, or eighty, if the impropriety be very great."

These two clauses are sufficient to enable a Mandarin to subject the inhabitants of a whole district to extortion, and to accumulate for himself a handsome fortune in a short time.

But this is not enough ; the master-piece of Chinese legislation is the vast system of responsibility, by which every subject of the Emperor becomes in some measure security for the conduct of his relative or his neighbour, his superior or his inferior. Public functionaries are, as we shall see, principally subject to this terrible responsibility ; but private persons are by no means exempt from it. Thus, in each territorial division, composed of a hundred families, there is a head, chosen by his fellow-citizens, along with six others, to watch over the payment of the taxes, and the performance of other public duties. This head is responsible for a crowd of offences that may be committed within his district. When the lands are badly cultivated, the punishment he may incur varies from twenty to eighty strokes, according to the extent of the land in question.

Here is a passage from the first chapter of the second volume :—

“The crime of high treason is that committed either against the State, by overthrowing the established government or endeavouring to do so, or against the Sovereign, by destroying the palace in which he resides, the temple where his family is worshipped, or the tombs in which the remains of his ancestors lie buried, or in endeavouring to do so. All persons who shall be convicted of having committed these execrable crimes,

or of having intended to commit them, shall suffer death by a slow and painful method, whether they be principals or accessories. All the male relatives in the first degree of the persons convicted of the above-mentioned crimes—the father, grandfather, and paternal uncles, as well as their sons, grandsons, and sons of their uncles, without any regard being had to their place of abode, or to any natural or accidental infirmities, shall be indiscriminately beheaded. All persons who shall know others guilty of high treason, or individuals having intention to commit such a crime, and who shall connive at the said crime, by not denouncing the authors of it, shall be beheaded.”

This frightful kind of responsibility is as revolting to common sense as to the feelings of a Christian; but it is quite natural that it should be in constant and energetic action in China. When we look at the case of a nation, composed of 300,000,000 of men, without any religious faith, and given up exclusively to the chances of speculation, we may conceive that some other than ordinary methods have been found necessary to unite under the same dominion elements so rebellious, and maintain the political unity of these innumerable populations.

And yet all this rigour does not prevent political commotion; on the contrary, the annals of this strange people show that China is the most revolutionary country in the world. With such systems, in fact, it is impossible to found anything but a factitious kind of order: the least breath is sufficient to compromise the solidity of an edifice so painfully, yet so badly, constructed; but it shows of what the Chinese would have been capable if they had availed themselves of the light that Christianity has diffused so abundantly among

the nations of the West. China presents, indeed, an astonishing spectacle; and there is something profoundly mysterious in the ancient civilisation which has been able to resist to this day the flux and reflux of so many revolutions, and to save itself from total ruin, in spite of the instability of its foundation, the defective morality of its citizens, and the falsehood of the principles on which it acts.

But, notwithstanding the numerous imperfections which we have pointed out, the Penal Code of China is still a remarkable monument of the human mind; and there may even be found in it some of the great principles of modern legislation: the right of pardon granted to the Sovereign, the regard to extenuating circumstances, the right of appeal, the respect for individual liberty, guaranteed by the responsibility of magistrates charged with the repression of crime, and others, which serve to protect the people in some measure against the tyranny of the Mandarins.

The science of jurisprudence does not exist in China; and the office of advocate is unknown. In some of the edicts published by the Emperor, for the confirmation of sentences pronounced against great criminals, there is sometimes reference to decisions made in preceding analogous cases; but it is made only with the view of illustrating the particular interpretation of a text in the code. Such references to precedents cannot be considered to constitute what is understood by jurisprudence. Every magistrate charged with the administration of the law interprets it in his own way, and by what he regards as the general spirit of the legislature; but there is no special doctrine to secure them from any departure from it.

Measures are taken, however, not only to enable the magistrates to understand perfectly the laws they are called on to apply, but also to diffuse a knowledge of the code, as far as possible, among the people at large. All officers and persons in the employment of Government are ordered to make it their particular study; and a special enactment of the code ordains, that at the end of every year, and in all localities, officers shall be examined upon their knowledge of the laws by their respective superiors; and if their answers are not satisfactory, they are to be fined a month's pay, if they hold a high office, or receive forty strokes of the bamboo if they are of inferior rank. All individuals, labourers, artisans, and others, who, on occasion of their first offence (if committed by accident, or through the fault of other persons) shall be able to explain the nature and object of the law affecting them, shall be pardoned and released.

The Chinese Mandarins enjoy considerable power; but their position is not quite so brilliant as is commonly imagined. They have, indeed, great facilities for the rapid acquirement of wealth; and if they are men of talent and capacity, they may arrive pretty quickly at high office; but they are never sure of the morrow: a caprice of the Emperor, or the denunciation of a rich and powerful enemy, may at any time cause them to be degraded and sent into exile, or even put to death.

Public employments are as much sought after in China as in Europe, or perhaps more so, if we may judge by the precautions taken to avoid solicitations and repress that feverish eagerness for office which has excited so much indignation among us in these latter days.

These precautions are curious enough to make it worth while to glance at them. Who knows whether something of the kind may not be thought worthy of adoption in France?

The number of officers for each tribunal and for every department is fixed by law; and whoever shall be appointed unnecessarily, over and above this number—or shall cause another to be so appointed—shall receive a hundred strokes of the bamboo, and an increase of punishment for every supernumerary officer whose nomination he shall have procured. Were such a law in force in our country, the ardour of suitors and the goodwill of patrons would probably be a good deal cooled.

When civil government officers, who are not distinguished for eminent services rendered to the State, shall have been recommended to the goodness of the Emperor as persons worthy of the highest honours, these officers, and those who have recommended them, are to be sent to prison and beheaded.

Addresses sent to the Emperor, in favour of any of the great officers of the State, are considered as indicating the existence of traitorous machinations subversive of government; and their authors, as well as the officers whom they concern, if they have been aware of the offence, are punishable with death. This excessive severity cannot be intended merely to repress court intrigues, and the attainment of high offices by ambitious though incapable persons; the law is principally anxious to guard against the slightest infringement of the power of the Emperor. In so vast a population as that of China, unrestrained by any moral or religious tie, the Sovereignty is naturally suspicious, and trem-

bles, in some measure, before those great functionaries who are the depositaries of such a portion of its power as would permit them, if they dared, to shake off its yoke, and compromise the safety of the throne. The law of China is, therefore, immoderately severe towards the slightest offence indicative of want of due respect for the Emperor. It is forbidden, under penalty of eighty strokes of the bamboo, to employ the individual name of his Majesty in any address, or to make use of it in instructing the people, or, under pain of a hundred strokes, to assume it one's self or bestow it on others. The bamboo also takes cognisance of the crime of throwing a stone, or any other projectile, against any of the Imperial residences.

The laws which regulate the conduct of the public functionaries in China, although very severe, are somewhat tempered by forms having a certain resemblance to what in France is called the Constitutional guarantee. When an officer of the government, either at court or in the provinces, commits any offence against the laws, whether in his public or private capacity, his superior, in all important cases, submits a circumstantial account of the affair to the Emperor, and the culprit cannot be brought to trial without the express sanction of his Majesty; privileged persons can only be pursued for offences against the law upon the positive order of the Emperor, to whom all proceedings are to be referred. But this privilege ceases when the crime partakes of the nature of treason; these crimes are, "rebellion, disloyalty, desertion, parricide, massacre, sacrilege, impiety, discord, insubordination, and incest."—(Vol. i. p. 27.)

It is especially with regard to the public functionaries that the system of penal responsibility of which we have

spoken above, is most energetically applied. Every time that a tribunal or a body of official persons, have incurred guilt by pronouncing erroneous decisions, or such as being either too mild or too severe, are contrary to the laws, or who have even become chargeable with faults of negligence, the *registrar* is considered as the principal author of the crime: all the other participators are punished, but with less severity in diminishing proportion up to the president, whose punishment is the slightest of all.

In China, the lower the officer, the higher the responsibility, for it is said the crime would not have been committed if he had refused his assistance. Thus the subalterns are liable to the most terrible punishments if they afford their concurrence in an illegal act, and to the resentment of their superiors if they refuse it. Their position would therefore become an intolerable one, but that in China official persons are never afraid of anything the law can menace them with, as they always trust to finding some way of wriggling out of it.

Another remarkable feature of the laws on this subject, is, that they regard an erroneous sentence pronounced by any of the tribunals as a crime. It is somewhat curious to European ideas to see a judge whipped for having made a mistake; and in China not only is a tribunal punishable for a wrong decision on a cause with the facts of which it may be presumed to be well acquainted, but even when a superior tribunal confirms the erroneous sentence of an inferior, or in the reverse case, when a cause has been sent from the superior to the inferior court.

The responsibility of the inferior officers is carried so far, that there are cases in which they would be put to

death for having sealed a letter badly. If the Imperial seal is awkwardly placed, or turned upside down, all the officers responsible for affixing it are to receive eighty strokes; and if the person to whom the document is sent should on this account feel any doubts of its authenticity, and hesitate to execute the orders it contains, and that any military operation should thus have failed, the clerk in the office is to be put to death.

The civil capacity of functionaries is restrained within certain limits; and this is perhaps one of the wisest arrangements of the Chinese law. Not only all high officers of government, but even their clerks and registrars, are forbidden to hold land in the district under their control. No government officer in towns of the first, second, or third order, may take a wife within the limits of his jurisdiction, under pain of eighty strokes of the bamboo, or a hundred if her father or mother have a suit before the courts; and he is to undergo the same punishment if he marry such a woman to his son, grandson, brother, or nephew.

The penal scale established by the code is very simple. The most ordinary punishments are the cangue, and the bamboo applied with the large or small end; the strokes varying in number up to a hundred. A number above sixty is often combined with temporary or perpetual banishment, and with the brand. The punishment of death is executed by strangulation or decapitation, according to the gravity of the offence; and there is also, for great crimes, the "slow and painful death," or the torture of the knife, which is inflicted in this manner: The executioner puts his hand into a covered basket in which are a number of knives, marked with the names of various limbs and parts of the body, and, drawing out

one at random, he cuts off the part indicated from the body of the victim. The relatives generally endeavour in such cases to shorten the unfortunate creature's sufferings, by giving money to the executioner that he may find as soon as possible the knife destined to be plunged into the heart.

The Chinese law, notwithstanding these atrocious severities, adopted with a view to the repression of crime, has some features not altogether unworthy of a modern code. There is especially a system of attenuating circumstances, founded on more moral bases than in the system pursued in France. With us the estimate of the value of such circumstances is left to the consideration of a jury, which has no other power than simply to declare that such circumstances exist. In China the law itself foresees certain facts, which when they are confirmed involve a diminution of punishment, or sometimes its entire remission.

In certain cases, on occasion, for instance, of some great event, the Emperor issues a general act of grace, which has the effect of a full pardon. This act, however, does not extend to those who have committed treasonable offences, or some others which are specified. The benefits of this amnesty extend to all who have committed offences through inadvertence, or who are implicated in them on account merely of their legal responsibility; but special pardons may be received by every criminal without exception.

Consideration for the relatives is often the inducement to a diminution of the punishment of the guilty, who have legally merited death; but in such cases there must be children under sixteen, or parents beyond seventy or particularly infirm, and the crime must be

of such a nature that it could be brought under the operation of an act of grace. The case is then referred to the Emperor, who gives the decision respecting it. If the culprit has merited banishment, he will receive instead a hundred strokes of the bamboo, and pay a fine.

Age and infirmity will sometimes obtain indulgence even for the culprit himself; but in that case an explanatory memorial must be addressed to the Emperor. It is often sufficient if the age or infirmity exist at the time of trial, even though they may not have existed at the epoch of the crime.

The culprit who voluntarily surrenders to the magistrate, without the crime having been otherwise discovered, obtains a pardon, saving some civil reparation; and confession always obtains a reduction of punishment—in some cases, specially provided for, indeed, a complete pardon, saving always, as before, the civil reparation. This appears judicious; and in this respect the Chinese are perhaps in advance of other nations. In France a confession will always obtain a reduction of punishment through a declaration of extenuating circumstances; but would it not be better that the law itself should provide for this reduction, which, being thus a matter of right, would often induce the guilty to make confessions, from the certainty of obtaining an amelioration of his lot?

The criminal who gives himself up, and at the same time causes the arrest of an accomplice, equally or more guilty than himself, has, in China, a right to a pardon.

The Chinese law, like that of France, provides certain cases of legal excuse. Thus, it is forbidden to enter an inhabited house by night without due authority; and if the master of it kill any one in the attempt to do

this at an improper hour, he is not punishable. It is regarded as an act of legitimate self-defence. A husband who kills an adulterous wife or her paramour is also held blameless.

The treatment of culprits in prison, and the mode in which they are to undergo their punishment, is subject to minute regulation; and when a magistrate commits offenders to prison, and neglects to take with respect to them the measures of rigour prescribed by the law, he is punished with a number of strokes of the bamboo, proportioned to the crimes which the said offenders have committed. It happens, therefore, sometimes, as may be supposed, that a magistrate, rather than expose himself to the bamboo, conducts himself towards his prisoners with an atrocious cruelty that we could not have believed if we had not witnessed it.

One day, when we were passing along the road leading to Peking, we met a party of soldiers, with an officer at their head, escorting a number of carts, in which were literally piled up a crowd of Chinese, who were uttering horrible cries. As we stopped to allow these cart-loads of human beings to pass, we were seized with horror on perceiving that these unfortunate creatures were nailed by the hand to the planks of the cart. A satellite whom we interrogated, replied, with frightful coolness, "We've been routing out a nest of thieves in a neighbouring village. We got a good many of them; and as we hadn't brought chains enough, we were obliged to contrive some way to prevent their escaping. So you see we nailed them by the hand."

"But do not you think there may be some innocent among them?"

"Who can tell? They have not been tried yet. We

are taking them to the tribunal; and by-and-by, if there are any innocent men among them, they will be separated from the thieves." The fellow seemed to think the thing quite a matter of course, and was even a little proud of the contrivance.

Perhaps, what was most hideous of all in this dreadful spectacle, was the mocking hilarity of the soldiers, who were pointing out to one another with an air of amusement the contortions and grimaces of the miserable creatures in their agony of pain. If a people can exhibit such barbarity as this in quiet and peaceable times, it may be imagined of what excesses they are capable under the excitement of revolution and civil war. In the provinces now in insurrection horrible abominations must be passing.

The Penal Code concerns itself greatly, as may be supposed, in the organisation of the family, which, in China, is a political as well as social institution; but, great as is the talk about filial piety, it is certain that there is much less real harmony and affection in Chinese families than among Europeans. The reason is obvious: in China the law and the bamboo, not duty and religion, regulate filial regard, and endeavour to maintain the ties of family by artificial means. In the beginning, doubtless, the laws passed on this subject were the expression of a true and lively feeling; but the feeling has passed away, and the law remains. The fear of the cangue and the rattan has taken the place of filial love; and the attachment of children to their parents is little more than an affair of habit.

Marriage, which forms the basis of domestic life, has been carefully and minutely regulated by Chinese legislation; and it is deeply impressed with the character of

the domestic tyranny that is found in the manners of all nations placed out of the influence of Christianity. In speaking of the rites and ceremonies observed in the celebration of marriage, we have alluded to the despotic authority of parents over their children. Thus it is not the future wedded pair, but their respective families, who make the first advances, fix the wedding presents, arrange the articles of the contract, &c. All these preliminaries are adjusted through the intervention of third persons, who serve as go-betweens, and haggle about the price of the marriageable merchandise. When the bargain is concluded, the parties are affianced. If either family afterwards refuse to ratify the contract, its chief is condemned to receive fifty strokes with the bamboo, and the marriage is ordered to take place. In cases where there has been no contract, the acceptance of the presents is considered as sufficient evidence of the consent of the contracting parties.

It is thus easy to conclude a marriage without at all consulting the persons most interested; but this is only the case with the first marriage. The father of a family cannot compel a son who has become a widower to marry a second time, under penalty of eighty strokes of the bamboo.

If, between the betrothal and the marriage, the relations of the bride promise her hand to another, the head of the family receives seventy strokes, or eighty if she has been already presented and approved. He who should accept a promise of marriage, knowing that negotiations were begun with another, would also receive eighty blows; but in cases where either party can be proved to have been guilty of theft or adultery, the contract becomes null and void.

The Chinese law points out certain circumstances as obstacles to the formation of an alliance. There are absolute hindrances, relative hindrances, or mere retarding obstacles. It is forbidden to marry during the time fixed by law for the mourning for a father, a mother, or a husband. A marriage contracted under these circumstances is not only declared null, but punished by a hundred strokes of the bamboo.

The marriage contracted during the mourning for a grandfather or grandmother, an uncle or an aunt, an elder brother or elder sister, remains valid*, but is punished, nevertheless, by eighty blows. A widow who has received from the Emperor any distinction of rank during the life of her husband, is punished by a hundred strokes if she marry again, besides being degraded from her rank, and separated from her new husband †

Marriages contracted between persons bearing the same family name, with any one concealing himself on account of some crime, or with actors or musicians, are in themselves null and void; and the delinquents are punished by a certain number of strokes of the bamboo.

One of the consequences of the manner in which marriages are made in China is the divorce, not merely for determinate causes, but by mutual consent. It seems natural enough that persons who have been married without being consulted, should have at least the permission to separate if they cannot agree. The husband may repudiate his lawful wife for the following causes—some of which appear rather whimsical: ste-

* Vol. I. p. 188.

† Vol. I. p. 189.

rility; immorality; contempt of the husband's father and mother; propensity to slander or to theft; a jealous temper; or habitual ill-health.

Impiety, which is placed by the law of China in the class of great crimes, is nothing but the failure in family duty. It is defined in the Code in the following manner:—"Impiety is the failure in respect and care for those to whom you owe your being, from whom you have had your education, and by whom you are protected. It is also impious to institute a law-suit against your near relations, to insult them, not to wear mourning for them, and not to respect their memories."*

The punishments incurred by this crime of impiety are very severe. Striking an elder relative is punished with death, and also bearing false witness against him, or even addressing abusive words to him, if he have heard the words, and complain of them. Parricides are subjected to the torture of the knife; and should they die in prison, their dead bodies are to undergo the mutilation.

The law fixes the kind and duration of mourning which every one is to wear on the death of a member of his family, and should any one receive news of the death of his father or mother, or a wife of her husband, without immediately putting on mourning, he is punishable by sixty blows, and a year of banishment. The same punishment is to be inflicted for leaving off the mourning before the appointed time, or for taking part, during its continuance, in any rejoicings.

Every government officer, on receiving intelligence of this nature, must immediately cease the exercise of his functions, and put on mourning. He must abstain

* Vol. I. p. 23.

from all public duty during the whole period; and if, with a view to avoid such suspension, he should falsely represent the deceased person to have been a more distant relation, he shall suffer the punishment of a hundred blows, and the forfeiture of his place, besides being declared incapable of ever holding any for the future. Military commanders, or persons holding important civil offices at a great distance from the Court, are however exempt from this law; and the line of conduct they are to observe on such occasions is to be determined by the express orders of the Emperor.*

It will be seen by these details, that the filial piety of the Chinese has need of the continual stimulus of the bamboo.

Among the ritual laws, there are some other rather curious provisions:—"All that concerns the science of the stars, as the sun, the moon, the five planets, the twenty-eight principal constellations, and others, as well as eclipses, meteors, comets, and other celestial appearances, shall be observed by the officers composing the astronomical council of Peking. If the said officers neglect to observe exactly the said appearances, and to mark their time in order to render an account of them to his Majesty the Emperor, they shall be punished by sixty blows of the bamboo."

Here is another arrangement, not entirely injudicious:—"It is forbidden to magicians, sorcerers, and fortune-tellers, to frequent the houses of the civil and military officers of government, under pretext of announcing the calamities that menace the nation, or the fortunate events that may be in store for it; they are to have five hundred strokes for every one of their predictions. This

* Vol. I. pp. 310, 311.

law does not, however, hinder them from casting the horoscopes of private individuals who may apply to them, nor from prognosticating births, nor consulting the stars in the accustomed manner.

The Chinese, notwithstanding their complete indifference in matters of religion, have very precise and severe laws relating to the official worship, and all negligence, imperfection, or irregularity in the observance of the rites, is repressed by the bamboo, applied equally to the delinquent and to the "master of the ceremonies," whose vigilance is presumed to have been in fault. Thus when the government officer charged with the education of the sacred pigs, which are fattened in the pagodas for solemn sacrifices, does not feed them in the manner prescribed by law, so that any one of them becomes indisposed, or thin, the officer is to receive forty strokes of the bamboo, and so many more for every additional sick pig. The health of the swinish multitude becomes, therefore, a very important affair; and a symptom of illness among them is enough to throw a whole pagoda into consternation.

The Bonzes, as well as the Tao-sse, or Doctors of Reason, are regarded by the law of China as civilly dead. They are forbidden to visit their fathers and mothers, to sacrifice to their dead ancestors, or, which is still more remarkable, to wear mourning for any of them, under pain of receiving a hundred stripes.

The penal code of China, of which we have endeavoured here to give a slight sketch, often enters into the most minute details concerning points with which European legislators would never think of concerning themselves; but in examining some of the countless numbers of its prescriptions and regulations, we have more than

once had occasion to remark that the practice of the people was by no means in accordance with them. Authority having lost the strength and energy that it once had, the people live pretty much as they please, without troubling themselves about the Code and its regulations. The Mandarins exercise their power according to their own caprice; and in the most serious affairs, when the law, perhaps, directs them to torture a prisoner to obtain a confession, or even to inflict the punishment of death, they pay no attention to the law unless it suits them to do so. Their own pleasure forms their only rule.

In the summer of 1849, we were crossing the province of Chan-toung to go to Peking. One evening we were proceeding in a hired cart along the imperial road which is bordered by great trees. Whilst the driver, seated upon one of the shafts of the vehicle, was occupied in smoking his pipe and whipping his lean mules, our eyes wandered carelessly over a dull and monotonous plain, that stretched out before us as far as the eye could reach.

Presently, the Chinese Phaeton, after having shaken the ashes out of his pipe, jumped down, and began looking to the right and left, like a man who is seeking for something. He soon came running back, and, pointing to the tops of some trees at the road-side, said, "Look there!" We raised our eyes in the direction in which he was pointing with the handle of his whip, and perceived numerous small cages suspended to the branches of the trees, and looking like some apparatus for bird-catching. "What is that?" said we. "Look well," he replied, "and you will soon know." The cart drove on, and soon, shuddering, we beheld in each of about

fifty cages, coarsely made with sticks of bamboo, a human head. Almost all were in a state of putrefaction, and the features hideously distorted. Some of the cages were broken, and the heads hung in them only by the beards or the hair; from others the heads had fallen out altogether, and lay at the foot of the trees. We could not long endure this disgusting sight.

As we drove away, the driver related to us that this district had formerly been infested by bands of thieves, who ravaged the whole country round, and yet contrived to escape the pursuit of the Mandarins. At the beginning of this year, however, a Commissioner Extraordinary had been sent from Peking, with a considerable armed force, and one day in a certain village he had seized almost the whole gang, and, without waiting for any authority from the Emperor, had had them all beheaded, and their heads hung to the trees on the road for a terror to evil doers.

This terrible execution had alarmed the whole district. "I would take good care," said our driver, "never to pass this way at night."

"Why?" said we; "there can hardly be much fear of robbers just now."

"No; but because, when it is dark, those heads all utter frightful vociferations. You can hear them cry out from all the villages round."

We were not at all surprised that our driver should put faith in this story, for the mere sight of these hideous cages affected our imaginations so that we could not for days get rid of the impression.

CHAP. VIII.

DEPARTURE FROM KOUANG-TSI-HIEN. — STORM. — GOVERNMENT COURIERS. — MODE OF EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE. — GRAND FESTIVAL AT HOANG-MEI-HIEN. — FIREWORKS. — CHINESE MUSIC. — IDEA WE OUGHT TO HAVE OF THE MUSIC OF THE ANCIENTS. — IMPERIAL ROAD TO PEKIN. — THE ROADS IN CHINA. — HALT UPON THE BORDERS OF LAKE POUYANG. — EMBARCATION. — KAKKERLACS ON BOARD THE JUNK. — GLANCE OVER THE PROVINCE OF HOU-PÉ. — AGRICULTURE IN CHINA. — IMPERIAL FESTIVAL OF LABOUR. — DETAILS CONCERNING AGRICULTURE. — AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS. — THE BAMBOO. — THE WATER LILY. — IMPERIAL RICE. — OBSERVANT CHARACTER OF THE CHINESE. — CLASSIFICATION OF CORN. — WHAT BECOMES OF THE SWALLOWS DURING WINTER. — MANNER OF MAKING A CAT TELL THE TIME. — METHOD OF HINDERING ASSES FROM BRAYING.

JUST as we were about to leave Kouang-tsi-hien, we received a visit from the Prefect of the town, whom we were happy to have an opportunity of thanking for the manner in which we had been treated. We asked what had become of the robber-chief.

“Yesterday,” said he, “I was employed the whole day in interrogating him, and that was why I did not come to pay my respects to you. I sat also during a part of the night without being able to succeed in making him denounce his accomplices. That is just like the kouan-kouen; they stand by each other, even through tortures and death. In a few days, when he has recovered, and that the frenzy caused by the torture has disappeared, I will send him off to the capital, with the necessary docu-

ments connected with his case. The superior tribunals of Ou-tchang-fou will then undertake it. The Ngan-tcha-sse, 'Inspector of Crimes,' will endeavour to make him speak, but I do not think he will succeed."

It is customary for the judge, after having flagellated a prisoner till he is covered with blood, and one mass of bruises, to have remedies applied to restore his strength, so as to be able to torture him again without danger of killing him; and these remedies are said to be so efficacious, that the torture can often be repeated daily.

About an hour after we had quitted Kouang-tsi-hien, the sky became covered with clouds, a violent clap of thunder broke over our heads, and enormous drops of rain began to fall. We feared for a time that we were going to have a tremendous storm, and the people of our caravan looked about anxiously in all directions for a place of refuge. The country we were traversing was wild and sterile, and the habitations were so few that we could not just then see any, except, at a very great distance, in a large village that lay quite away from the road, and that we could only have reached by crossing the fields.

Our Weeping Willow was in extreme perplexity, and he came every moment to our palanquins to ask what was to be done. "This is a most vexatious circumstance!" said he.

"Yes very," we replied; "we are going to have bad weather, it seems."

"In that case what do you propose to do?"

"Do! what can we do? It's not easy to help it."

"But if the storm comes ——"

"Well, we must submit as well as we can—be resigned; we do not see what else can be done."

But our conductor did not at all relish the idea of

resignation, and continually returned to the charge, imagining, evidently, that, if we liked, we could find some means of conjuring the storm, or procuring shelter. He seemed to think that men like us ought not to have been embarrassed about such a thing as that. Fortunately for us, there was no storm after all; but after the few large heavy drops, the rain began to fall quietly and regularly. It continued to do so the whole day, and no one experienced the smallest inconvenience. On the contrary, the atmosphere, which before had been suffocating, became deliciously cool and fresh. The mud was not immoderate, as we were on a sandy soil, and one that was so dry and thirsty, that it drank in with avidity all the water that fell from the sky. The palanquin-bearers appeared quite delighted when they felt the rain running down their backs, and thus obtained so easily the pleasure of a prolonged bath; they burst into peals of laughter; they sang with all their might and main; and seemed to make a mere sport of their toilsome vocation. The horseman and pedestrians were not less pleased; but, with bare heads, and for their entire clothing a thin pair of drawers, they revelled with delight in the cool fresh rain. We really envied them, but the Rites imperatively required that we should remain shut up in our palanquins.

Towards noon we were joined by two travellers, with peaked rattan caps, a threefold cotton girdle, and an enormous varnished box, worn in a cross-belt; on their feet they had sandals, fastened with leathern thongs. They walked on in silence, swinging their arms, with a long and uniform step, but with no appearance of haste. Their eyes were constantly fixed on the ground, and they scarcely turned their heads when they passed

through the middle of our caravan. In a few minutes they were far from us, and soon after quite out of sight. These two men were government couriers, going to Peking by the Imperial road, and the varnished boxes on their backs contained despatches from the Administration of Ou-tchang-fou. The Chinese Government employs couriers on foot and on horseback, whose services are performed with tolerable regularity; by this means it is made acquainted with what is passing in the provinces, and amongst the tributary nations. Relays of horses are kept at certain distances all along the principal roads, but on ordinary occasions they do not go faster than a trot. If the intelligence to be conveyed demands more celerity, the estafettes gallop day and night, or sometimes employ pedestrian couriers, whose pace is said to be faster than that of a horse. Before being accepted to fill this office, these men go through a long course of preparatory training, by making forced marches, loaded with a number of bags filled with sand, which are hung about their limbs, and the quantity of which they increase every day. By degrees they acquire great strength and agility; and when afterwards they diminish the weight to which their legs are accustomed, they are able to walk for days together without difficulty. These couriers never appear hurried; you would say they were walking at an ordinary pace, and yet they get along with extraordinary rapidity.

There is no such thing in China as a post, for the use of the public; and when you wish to send letters you must trust to the complaisance of some traveller, or send a messenger at your own expense, which is, of course, a very costly method. Accidents of various kinds also happen

to the messengers on the road ; and often, after all the expense you have been at, your letters go astray. The missionaries, who are accustomed to the prodigious facility of correspondence that exists in Europe, find it very hard to endure the tediousness of these communications. Fifty days suffice to bring a letter from Paris to Canton ; but from Canton to Peking takes three months.

The Chinese do not suffer much from this state of things ; for having scarcely any domestic affections, they do not feel the need of corresponding with their relations and friends. Looking at everything only on the positive and material side, they have no idea of the tender relations by which two hearts delight to draw near in intimate correspondence, and communicate their joys and their sorrows. They know nothing of the lively emotions that the mere sight of a known handwriting can awaken ; their hands never tremble as they break the seal of a letter ; they do not often settle even their commercial affairs by writing, but prefer going to the place and treating *vivâ voce*.

It must not be supposed, however, that the Chinese do not frequently write letters ; on the contrary, they address missives to each other on all occasions ; but there is never anything friendly and confidential in them. They are mere commonplace formalities, consecrated by custom, and might be sent to any other person, as well as the one to whom they are addressed. If, therefore, any one should happen to open and read a letter addressed to any one else, provided he afterwards communicate its contents to the lawful owner of the epistle, it is a mere trifle, and no offence. If you see

any one writing and feel at all curious, you have only to lean over his shoulder, and coolly read the characters he is tracing ; nobody minds doing that.

The first year of our residence in China a fact of which we were witnesses furnished us with the means of estimating the importance and value of a letter in this country. We were staying at the time with a literary man, a native of Peking, who had left his family eight years before to take the office of schoolmaster in one of the towns of the south. Many conversations that we had had with this Chinese had led us to suppose that he was not quite of so cold and insensible a nature as most of his countrymen ; his manners were kind, and he had the appearance of possessing more warmth of heart than is common here. One day we were on the point of sending off a messenger to Peking, and we asked him whether he would not like to take the opportunity of sending something to his family or friends. After considering for a moment he said, "Oh, yes ; I think I should write a letter to my old mother ; I have heard nothing of her for four years, and she does not know where I am. Since there is such a good opportunity it would not be amiss if I were to write a few lines."

We thought his filial piety did not seem of a very fervent complexion ; but we merely told him that he had better, in that case, write immediately, as the messenger was going off that evening. "Directly, directly ;" he replied ; "you shall have the letter in a few minutes," and he called to one of his pupils, who was singing out his classical lesson in the next room — probably some fine passage out of Confucius upon the love that children

owe to their parents. The pupil presented himself with the proper air of demure modesty.

“Interrupt your lesson for a moment,” said the master; “take your pencil, and write me a letter to my mother. But don’t lose any time, for the courier is going directly. Here, take this sheet of paper;” and the pupil accordingly took the paper, and set about writing to his master’s mother.

The Chinese mostly write their letters upon fancy paper; upon which are stamped, in red and blue, figures of birds, flowers, butterflies, and mythological personages. The Chinese character being always of a fine black, is not lost amidst these fantastic ornaments.

When the pupil had left the room with his sheet of ornamented paper, we asked the schoolmaster whether this lad knew his mother. “Not in the least,” he answered. “I don’t think he knew whether she was living or had already ‘saluted the world.’”

“In that case, how can he write the letter? You did not even tell him what he was to say.”

“Don’t he know quite well what to say? For more than a year he has been studying literary composition, and he is acquainted with a number of elegant formulas. Do you think he does not know perfectly well how a son ought to write to his mother?”

We had nothing to reply to this; but we understood immediately the difference between filial piety, as it is felt and practised in China, and as it is so magnificently described and commented on in their books.

The pupil, obedient to his master’s orders, lost no time. He returned soon afterwards, with his letter in an elegant envelope, which he had even had the polite-

ness to seal all ready; so that this admirable son did not even give himself the trouble to read the unctuous expressions of tenderness and respect that he had addressed to his mother. No doubt he had known them by heart a long while, and had himself taught them to the pupil. He wished, however, to write the address with his own hand; which appeared to us rather superfluous, for the letter would have done just as well for any other mother in the Celestial Empire as for the one to whom it was addressed, and any other would doubtless have felt as much satisfaction in the receipt of it.

We travelled the whole day through the fresh pouring rain, and arrived in the evening at Hoang-mei-hien, a town of the third order, situated on the banks of a little river, not far from the Imperial road. The proximity of the lake Pou-yang, the Blue River, and the road to Peking, gives a great commercial activity to this town, and it receives all the merchandise sent from the north or south of the Empire, for the great central mart of Han-keou.

Hoang-mei-hien was to be our last stage in the province of Hou-pé; and we were received in it with a magnificence that we had been little accustomed to since we had left the province of Sse-tchouen. It might have been thought that the Mandarins of this town intended to make us forget the annoyances we had experienced for the previous month.

The Communal Palace, in which we were lodged, was tastefully fitted up, and besides the hangings of rich red silk, the lanterns, and the sentences suspended on the walls, there were vases of flowers that shed a delicious perfume through the apartments.

The ceremonial of visiting etiquette was observed in all its rigour; there seemed no end of our bows, and of the abundant outpouring of fine hollow words; and at last, to crown all, we were treated at night to a serenade and a brilliant display of fireworks.

These were composed first of a prodigious quantity of crackers, suspended in large bunches on bamboo poles, their dry and noisy detonations never ceasing for a single moment. This perpetual cracking noise was only interrupted by the explosion of a sort of bomb shell, that went off very suddenly, and with great noise; but the grandest pieces were placed at the angles of the court, where dragons and other fabulous beasts vomited fire at every pore. There were rockets of various colours, that shot into the air with splendid effect, and also, a kind of wheel, called by the Chinese "a flying sun," which pleased us most of all. It has merely to be put on a large plate, and placed on the ground; the wheel is then kindled, and immediately it begins to turn rapidly, throwing out bluish flames in all directions; and then suddenly springing into the air, it rushes to an immense height, and lets fall a fiery rain of all sorts of brilliant and varied colours.

The Chinese have always been passionately fond of powder, of which they knew the use long before the Europeans, but their taste is less decided for the kind made use of in war than for the milder sort employed for fireworks. They were firework makers before they were artillerists, and they have remained faithful to their first inclinations, liking squibs and crackers a great deal better than cannon.

In all their festivals and solemnities of whatever character — births, marriages, funerals, meetings of

friends, theatrical representations, receptions of Mandarins and great men — they are sure to manage somehow or other to bring in fireworks. In the towns and villages you hear them popping and cracking at almost every hour of the night and day, so that one might take the whole Chinese Empire for one great pyrotechnic establishment. We have said that in the poorest hovels, where the people have scarcely the necessaries of life, you are always sure to find melon seeds, and we might have added also that fireworks are seldom wanting.

Of Chinese music, we cannot speak so favourably as of their pyrotechnic displays. It is probable that, for this grand evening's entertainments, all the most distinguished artists of Hoang-mei-hien had been collected, and the orchestra was certainly considerable, and the instruments in great variety. There were hautboys, violins, flutes, very much like ours, and other both wind and stringed instruments of such whimsical forms that we cannot attempt to give any description of them. Chinese music, it is true, has a certain softness and melancholy in its tones, that pleases you pretty well at first, but it is so intolerably monotonous, that if prolonged it becomes exceedingly irritating to the nerves. The Chinese have no semi-tones in their scale; indeed, one might suppose they merely blew into their instruments, or twanged their strings at random, from the inspiration of the moment; however, it appears they have notes, and though their compositions are doubtless not of much scientific value, you do sometimes hear something like simple melodies in them, such as are heard in the chants of savages, and which are more or less agreeable.

European books concerning China, and also the works

of the Chinese themselves, might lead you to suppose they attached great importance to music, even to the point of regarding it as an essential element in good government and the happiness of the people. The *Yo-king*, or Book of Music, was counted among the sacred books, but it was lost in the great fire ordered by the Emperor Tsing-che-hoang-ti. Confucius speaks of this canonical book with the greatest respect, and deploras the loss of such a precious monument of antiquity. The esteem and veneration professed in ancient times for "the rites and music," might lead us to suppose that before the introduction of the worship of Buddha and Lao-tze these words designated the primitive religion of the Chinese, of whose doctrines little is known, but which must have been based on the great traditions confided to humanity. The *Yo-king* is supposed to have been a collection of hymns and prayers, chanted in the sacrifices and other religious solemnities, and containing also religious doctrine and instruction, and the Book of Rites is thought to have formed its complement.

This opinion, that in the early ages of China, "music and the rites" was an expression for religion might be confirmed by many passages from the annals and canonical books. In the *Li-ki*, for instance, you find these words: "Music is the expression of the union of earth and heaven. With music and ceremonies nothing in the Empire is difficult. Music acts upon the interior of man, and brings it into connection with the spirit. Its principal end is to regulate the passions; it teaches fathers and children, princes and subjects, husbands and wives, their reciprocal duties. The sage finds in music the rules of his conduct."

The philosophers of antiquity sometimes go still further, even to declaring that it is the chief support of authority, the bond of the laws, &c. ; and it is evident that reference is then made to the religious instruction contained in the "Yo-king." The Annals, and all ancient writings, agree in saying that music was, in the early ages, the object of the continual meditations of sages, and of the care of government.

It is related that Chun, the founder of the Chinese monarchy, inquired everywhere, when he visited different parts of the Empire, whether they had changed nothing in music. We can hardly suppose the question was merely of singing and notation. According to the school of Confucius, ceremonies and music are the most prompt and efficacious methods for reforming manners, and rendering the State prosperous. "Under the first dynasties," says a famous Chinese moralist, "the government had perfect unity, the ceremonies and music embraced the whole Empire." After the first dynasties, there came divisions into the government, and the ceremonies and music became only an empty name without reality. The ancient poets call music the echo of wisdom, the mistress and mother of virtue, the manifestation of the laws of heaven. Its purpose is to make known the *Chan-ty*, "the sovereign Lord," and to lead man towards him. All these sayings are very remarkable, and indicate evidently that among the ancient Chinese, music was the expression of religious worship paid to the Divinity ; it is, therefore, easy to understand the great importance attached to it ; but at present, as the above-quoted philosopher, Yang-siou, remarks, music, that is to say, religion, is only an empty name without reality.

The town of Hoang-mei-hien seemed determined to treat us in grand style, and to keep it up to the last. The next morning, just as we were about to set off, the Prefect and the principal functionaries presented themselves, and we were informed that an addition of thirty soldiers, and two military Mandarins, was to be made to our escort. These heroes were indeed already drawn up in the courtyard; at least some were huddled in a corner, others crouched on the ground, and some were leaning against the wall, smoking or fanning themselves. Their costume was tolerably uniform, and the ensign was standing in a most irreproachable attitude, and seemed to feel all the sublimity of his office. He held gravely in both hands a long bamboo pole, on the top of which floated a triangular flag of a red colour, inscribed on one side with the words "Militia of Hoang-mei-hien," and on the other with "Bravery!" As we crossed the court, accompanied by the authorities of the town, we were saluted by more fireworks: we really hardly understood such a display of magnificent courtesy. An expression made use of by the Prefect, however, afforded an explanation of these unaccustomed honours. At the moment when we were entering our palanquins, after having long and pompously thanked him for all his politeness, "You see," said he, "that you have nowhere been treated with more attention than in the province of Hou-pé." "Than in the town of Hoang-mei-hien," we replied, smiling; and with this amendment we entered the palanquins, and were carried away through an immense crowd, that thronged every avenue to the Communal Palace.

In all probability the order to give us this kind of ovation at Hoang-mei-hien had proceeded from the pa-

lace of the Governor of Ou-tchang-fou. They knew very well — for we had expressed our opinion often enough, and loudly enough — that we had not been satisfied with the treatment we had generally received in Hou-pé. They were not sure that our complaints on this subject might not lead to vexatious consequences, and they wished, before allowing us to enter the next province, to do something to give us a pleasant recollection of Hou-pé.

On leaving this town we completely changed the direction of our route. Our course from the frontier of Thibet to Canton described two sides of a triangle, of which Hoang-mei-hien occupies the apex. One side of this triangle runs from east to west, and the other from north to south. We met on this road a great number of travellers, amongst whom it was easy for us to distinguish the men of the north from their southern brethren. The latter might be known by their pale and somewhat effeminate but refined and intelligent faces, as well as by their more elegant costume; they were besides more talkative and playful; we often heard them warbling some song, though in a harsh nasal voice, and teasing each other with jokes and puns. The heat was scorching, but they seemed very little inconvenienced by it. The northmen on the contrary were suffocated by the heat and dripping with perspiration. They spoke little and sung still less, and only endeavoured to refresh themselves by continual chewing of bits of areca nut. Their swarthy complexions, thick moustaches, more vigorous limbs, and especially their sonorous language, all bristling with rough aspirations, distinguished them strongly from the Southern Chinese. Almost all the travellers were traders, and travelling

with the merchandise that they were going to sell, or had just bought. Their means of transport for it were carts with two horses, and caravans of asses and mules, and especially barrows, guided by two men, one pulling by a rope, the other pushing in a pair of shafts. Sometimes when the wind was favourable they tried to lessen their toil by fixing above their small vehicles a mat or even spreading a sail. This contrivance must have afforded them much relief, or they would not have adopted it, for they are not the men for any needless complication of machinery.

The road we were following was broad enough, and at some time or other, under former dynasties, had most likely been a fine one, but it was now in a detestable state, almost everywhere broken up, full of hillocks and hollows, and mud holes, and frightful ruts, which the carts and barrows followed with the most scrupulous assiduity. It was easy to see that time was the only functionary who had charge of the road. The Chinese assert that the carelessness of government with respect to the modes of communication only dates from the accession of the Mantchoo-Tartar dynasty. The government does in fact never concern itself about the roads, except those which the Emperor has to traverse when he takes the trouble to travel. As to the people, they must manage as well as they can; and in the northern provinces, where navigable rivers are not so numerous as in the south, accidents frequently happen, and carriages upset and travellers crushed form incidents too common for anybody to concern themselves about; you merely pass by on the other side. There are some districts in which the public have endeavoured to supply for themselves a remedy for this deplorable negligence of

the government. In all lawsuits, disputes, and quarrels, it is customary only to have recourse to the tribunals at the last extremity; most people prefer choosing as arbiters some old men of tried integrity and long experience, whose decisions they respect. In such cases it is very common to condemn the party declared to be in the wrong to mend a certain piece of the road at his own expense by way of fine, and in these districts the good state of the road is in a direct ratio with the quarrelsome and litigious spirit of the inhabitants.

We found this day's march on the Imperial road extremely fatiguing; the tumult of the travellers, and the thick dust in which we were constantly enveloped, added much to the oppression of the excessive heat. We regretted our little cross roads, where at least we had the advantage of being able to rest from time to time under the shade of a great tree, or drink a cup of ice-cold water from a mountain spring. Before the end of the day we arrived once more on the banks of that famous Blue River, which we seemed to meet everywhere since our departure from the capital of Sse-tchouen, and which we had passed on the ice not far from its source in traversing one of the great valleys of Thibet. On this day we crossed it in a large passage boat; this was the last time, and after an hour's navigation we landed at a little town called Hon-keou, that is to say, "Mouth of the Lake."

The lake at which we had now arrived was the celebrated Pou-yang, which the Chinese have brought into communication with the Yellow River, by cutting a tongue of land that separated them. At Hon-keou we had to settle a very knotty point, and one that to us was of no little importance. To get to Nan-tchang-fou, the

capital of Kiang-si, we had to choose between two roads, equally frequented by travellers; the one by water across the lake Pou-yang, a real inland sea, which is delightful in fine weather, and with a favourable breeze, but dreadfully tedious if the wind be contrary, and very dangerous if you happen to meet with a storm. The other way was by land, but by roads generally bad, and nearly impassable in the season of rain and tempest, for then you have to journey almost incessantly through quagmires and ponds. There are also no Communal Palaces in the towns where you stop, and the inns are small, dirty, inconvenient, and destitute of every comfort. Between these two we had to choose, and the choice was not easy. If any one would have secured us a good wind, we should certainly have preferred the water; and on the other hand it would be more prudent to go by land, if any one would undertake that it should not rain. What our friend the Willow thought, it was impossible to guess; he was exceedingly ready to point out the inevitable inconveniences in either course, but when it came to taking a resolution, one way or the other, he wiped his tearful eyes and had nothing more to say.

The case seemed so perplexing, that we thought it better to stay a day at Hon-keou, in order to obtain a little more information. "Let us go to bed," said we to our conductor, "we are too tired to-day to settle this grave question; to-morrow we can reflect on it with calmness and deliberation." "Yes, that plan is full of wisdom," said he; "in great enterprises precipitation is always injurious."

On the following day, after consulting some experienced persons of the locality, it was decided that on the whole we had better go by the lake. There was a

favourable breeze, the sky was clear, and we heard from every one that there was no likelihood of any immediate change. The lake Pou-yang is about forty-five miles long, by from fifteen to eighteen broad, and with the good wind that was blowing, one day would suffice to carry us to the end of our voyage. A junk was hired, a Mandarin junk we were told, but it was really a merchantman, and the same evening we went on board in order to be able to start at dawn on the following morning.

A tolerably spacious cabin had been reserved for the Willow and ourselves, but we had scarcely retired to rest (as we supposed) than we began much to regret that we had not passed the night on shore. Swarms of kakkerlaes began to make war upon us in the most pitiless manner. We heard them first skimming round in circles, pursuing one another, bumping themselves against the wainscot, and performing all kinds of gambols, very amusing doubtless for them, but far from agreeable to us. By degrees, however, they became quieter, to rest a little probably, in order to be ready for their more atrocious manœuvres, and then they took a little more exercise, to get up an appetite. Nothing comes amiss to a kakkerlac: shoes, hats, coats, lamp-oil, ink and ink-stands, tobacco, and even the tobacco pouch; but their favourite dainties are the tops of your fingers, ears, and toes; they would in fact eat a traveller up, clothing, bedding and all, if they were let alone—it would only be a question of time and patience. We heard them constantly gnawing, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Sometimes they had the insolence to pass over our faces; we could feel the tickling of their little feet and their cold stomachs. At length by dint of

searching they discovered some small opening, and then they were not long in insinuating themselves beneath the coverlet, and beginning to promenade along our arms and legs.

There was such a multitude of these disgusting insects on board this junk, and they were so intolerably impertinent, that we had to pass the whole night in chasing them; and even in this it was necessary to be extremely cautious, and merely put them to flight without crushing them, for they give out such an intolerably fetid odour when crushed, that one would really almost rather make them a present of a toe, than come to this extremity.

These kakkerlacs swarm in the south of China, and as they have a very marked predilection for whatever is dirty, and especially old furniture and old rags, they choose mostly to invade the habitations of the poor, though they do not by any means despise those of the rich. They make their way into linen, books, and chinks of floors, and seem to find everywhere suitable board and lodging; but the junks are their most favoured resort, and they increase and multiply in them in a truly terrific manner.

It is not a disagreeable-looking creature, being of a pretty chestnut colour, and about an inch long. It can hardly go further in its flight than a grasshopper can leap, but to make amends it can gallop with marvellous rapidity. Were it not for its bug-like odour and its devastating and cunning propensities, it would not be an uninteresting animal.

As soon as day broke, the army of kakkerlacs effected a retreat, and retired into cantonments. The captain of the junk gave the order to sail, and, strange to say, it

did not appear that there was anything to stop for; provisions had been laid in the evening before, and all the men were on board,—not one failed to answer to the roll-call. The capstan was then manned, and the anchor began to rise to the measured song of the sailors, and the sound of the tam-tam. An immense matting sail was unfurled, a packet of fireworks let off, and as the breeze caught the junk we began to glide rapidly over the blue waters of the lake Pou-yang.

We had now left the province of Hou-pé, to enter that of *Kiang-si*. Hou-pé signifies “north of the Lake,” and serves to designate the country lying northward of the great lakes Pou-yang and Thing-toun. The province of Hou-pé is in all respects very inferior to that of Sse-tchouen. The land, which is not very fertile, is covered with a multitude of ponds and marshes, of which the Chinese, industrious and patient as they are, can make but little use. The villages have in general a very poor and wretched appearance. The inhabitants have an unhealthy and rather wild aspect, and are frequently affected by cutaneous diseases. We have nowhere else noticed so much baldness, or so many scald-heads, and there is little doubt that these infirmities proceed from the stagnant waters amongst which these unfortunate people pass their lives, and still more from the unwholesome diet to which they are confined. It is said that in the province of Hou-pé, the harvest of a year is seldom sufficient for a month’s consumption. The great populations of the towns are supplied from the neighbouring provinces, and especially Sse-tchouen, which cannot in ten years consume the produce of one. We remarked, nevertheless, in the province of Hou-pé, some tolerably fine plantations of indigo, cotton and hemp,

besides the numerous rice-fields that border the lakes and rivers.

Although the eighteen provinces of the Chinese Empire cannot all be placed on the same rank for fertility and the value of their productions, it may nevertheless be said that on the whole China is an admirably fertile country, and cultivated with remarkable intelligence. In no other country in the world has agriculture been so highly honoured; from the remotest antiquity, it has been placed in the first rank among various kinds of industry. It has been celebrated by the greatest moralists, such as Confucius and Meng-tze; the magistrates have constantly, in their proclamations, recommended the people to be assiduous in the culture of the fields; and the head of the State—the Emperor—never fails to render homage to agricultural labour, at the opening of each year, by a public ceremonial which dates as far back as the 12th century before our era. On the twenty-third day of the third Chinese moon—that is to say, towards the end of the month of March—the monarch goes to the sacred field accompanied by three princes of the blood, the nine Presidents of Courts, a great number of other functionaries of secondary rank, and several labourers. After having offered sacrifice upon an earthen altar, he himself lays his hand upon the plough, and traces a certain portion of a furrow; following his example the princes and ministers, each in their turn, guide the plough, and trace some furrows; and then the labourers complete the tillage of the field.

In order to enable the reader better to judge of the importance attached to this ceremony, we will translate the programme of the fête presented in the form of a me-

morial to the Emperor Kien Long, and inserted, in 1767, in the gazettes of Peking and the provinces.

“The Tribunal of Rites, and the other Tribunals, respectfully announce the ceremony of the 23d day of the 3d moon, of the thirty-second year of the reign of Kien Long (April 22, 1767). The Emperor will perform in person the labour of tilling the ground. On the evening before, the Mandarins of the secondary palace of the Emperor will respectfully bear the tablet of the Tribunal of ministers, to the temple dedicated to the inventors and protectors of agriculture. The Mandarins of the office of Public Revenue will prepare the instruments of tillage and the boxes filled with seed corn, and transmit them to the Governor of the capital. The latter, after having covered them with silk envelopes, and enclosed them in boxes, will have them carried, and will himself accompany them to the Sacred Field.

“Red tablets will be planted on the ground to mark and distinguish the different portions of land which the princes and great persons have to till, and all the instruments of tillage will be placed in order near the Imperial pavilion.

“On the day of the ceremony, the Mandarins of the Emperor's household, the Master of the Ceremonies, and the other officers of the Court will repair at the fifth watch (day break) to the outside of the Imperial palace, there to wait the conclusion of the sacrifices. These being finished, the ten great officers of the first guard will surround the Son of Heaven, and conduct him to his palace to repose himself and quit his habits of ceremony. The princes and great personages who have to perform the labour will also quit theirs. In the mean time the plough and the whip, and the boxes of

seed corn to be used by the Emperor, will be taken out of their envelopes and placed on one side of the Sacred Field.

“The Master of the Ceremonies, the Mandarins of the Imperial Household, and the other officers on duty, will assemble at noon in the Sacred Field. The four titled old men, the fourteen chanters, the thirty-six players of instruments, and twenty peasants wearing straw hats, and holding spades, rakes, pitchforks, and brooms in their hands, will place themselves in two lines, to the right and the left of the Sacred Field, along with the fifty standard bearers, the thirty-four old men of Peking, and the thirty labourers of the three orders. All being ranged in order shall stand waiting in silence.

“The hour of tillage having come, the first Mandarin of Agriculture shall enter the palace to invite the Son of Heaven. Then the Master of the Ceremonies shall take a flag and shall wave it three times. The three princes, and the nine great personages who are to till the ground, will then go to the spots marked out, and all who have any office will repair to their posts, the rest ranging themselves on two sides of the Sacred Field.

“The ten great officers of the first guard having surrounded the Emperor, will conduct him to the Sacred Field, and his Majesty will advance, with his face turned towards the south. As soon as he has reached the spot, the President of the Tribunal of Rites will say in a loud voice, ‘Present the plough,’ and immediately the Minister of Public Revenue, with his face turned towards the north, will kneel down on both knees, and will present the handle of the plough to the Son of Heaven, who will take hold of it with his right hand. The President of the Tribunal of Rites will then say in

a loud voice, 'Present the whip,' and immediately the Governor of Peking, with his face turned towards the north, will kneel down with both knees on the ground and will present the whip, which the Son of Heaven will take in his left hand. Two old men will then lead forth the oxen, and two labourers of the first order will support the plough. The President of the Tribunal of Rites, and the first Mandarin of Agriculture, will walk before them. At the first movement of his Majesty all those who have flags will wave them, and the singers will begin their songs to the accompaniment of all the instruments, the Governor of Peking will bear the box of grain, and the Minister of Public Revenue will follow him. The Emperor will till three furrows.

"When the Son of Heaven shall have finished his tillage, the President of the Tribunal of Rites will say in a loud voice, 'Receive the plough.' The Minister of Public Revenue will then kneel down to receive it. The President of the Tribunal of Rites will then say in a loud voice, 'Receive the whip.' The Governor of Peking will immediately kneel down to receive it. They will cover the plough and the whip, as well as the boxes of seed corn, with the silk envelopes. Then the music will stop, and the President of the Tribunal of Rites will invite the Son of Heaven to ascend the imperial pavilion. The same President, and the first Mandarin of Agriculture, will conduct his Majesty up the central staircase, and his Majesty will seat himself with his face turned to the south.

"All the Princes, Mandarins, and great personages who have no part in the remainder of the ceremony, will range themselves on either side of the Emperor, and remain standing. Then the three princes will

begin to till the ground, and till five furrows, each having an old man to guide their oxen, two labourers to hold up the plough, and two inferior Mandarins of Peking to walk after them and sow the seed. When they have finished, they will come and take their places. The nine first dignitaries of the Empire will then begin to till and will make nine furrows, each having an old man to guide the oxen, and two labourers to support the plough, and two inferior Mandarins to walk after them and sow. When they have finished they will come and take their places in proper order, and remain standing; and the inferior Mandarins of Peking will cover the implements of husbandry and the boxes of grain with their silk envelopes, and will carry them away.

“The President of the Tribunal of Rites will then lead to the foot of the Imperial pavilion, on the western side, all the Mandarins of Peking, the old men and the labourers, dressed according to their condition, and each bearing an implement of husbandry. Then all together, with their faces turned towards the north, will kneel three times, and three times strike the earth with their foreheads, to thank the Son of Heaven.

“After this ceremony, the old men and the labourers will go and finish the tillage of the Sacred Field; and then the President of the Tribunal of Rites will come and inform his Majesty that the ceremonies of the tillage are finished. The Emperor will then descend from the pavilion by the eastern staircase, and will enter a car of state, and will go out by the gate of Sien-nang, escorted by choirs of singers and bands of musicians.”

A similar solemnity takes place in every province, the Governor taking the part of the Emperor, and proceeding, with his principal officers, to the field to be cultivated. Whatever influence the government and the Mandarins may have in the matter, it is certain that the Chinese profess a great esteem for agriculture, and public opinion ennobles in some measure all that relates to the labours of the fields. How many times have we seen on the roads in the northern provinces rich farmers, sometimes wearing silken robes, standing waiting gravely with a three-pronged pitchfork the passage of the carts and caravans of mules, in order to collect the dung. It was evident there was in their eyes nothing mean and despicable in the occupation, and the travellers manifested no surprise at it. The very word made use of for this action is elegant and dignified; it signifies literally to *gather*—thus you gather flowers, or the dung of horses—the expression is always the same.

Chinese agriculture is, from the great division of territorial property, seldom conducted on a large scale. There are indeed, in the north, farms of considerable extent, but whether the cultivation be on a large or a small scale, the Chinese use only the most simple instruments. Their ploughs are frequently without any forewheel, and only turn up the earth a very little way.

In the south, the rice-fields are usually tilled with buffaloes, called “aquatic oxen.”

In the north, our common domestic oxen are made use of, as well as horses, mules, and asses; and more than once it happened to us to see a plough drawn by

a woman, while her husband walked behind, and guided it. Pitiably it is to see the poor things sticking their little feet into the ground as they go, and drawing them painfully out again, and so hopping from one end of the furrow to the other. One day we had the patience to wait a long while at the side of a road, to watch whether the poor labouring wife, who was drawing the plough, was allowed from time to time to rest herself, and we saw with pleasure that there was a cessation of work at the end of each furrow. The husband and wife then sat down in pastoral fashion, on a little hillock, under the shade of a mulberry tree, and refreshed themselves by smoking their pipes.

In the southern provinces, the Chinese prepare their lands, and especially their rice-fields, with human manure, which they spread over them in profusion. It is unquestionable that by this means they give a strong impulse to vegetation; but it is possible, also, that the rural produce under this system is of a less salubrious nature, and it may be that to this cause is attributable the existence of several maladies among the inhabitants of the south that are unknown in the north. Without being aware of the value attached by the Chinese to this kind of manure, one would hardly reconcile with their known character the liberality with which countless small buildings are provided in all parts for the accommodation of travellers. There is no town or village, where the most eager competition does not take place on this point. On the least frequented roads, in the most desert places, you are astonished to find these small edifices, built of straw, clay, or even stone. You would really suppose yourself in a country, where solicitude for objects of public interest was carried even to

excess; but, in reality, self-interest is the motive power that has been at work in the production of these useful institutions.

When you enter a Chinese hamlet, or approach a farm, you are often suddenly struck by a horrible stench that threatens to suffocate you. Not that healthy, though somewhat powerful odour, that escapes from cow-houses and sheep-folds, but an atrocious mixture of all that is disgusting. The Chinese have, indeed, such a passion for human manure of all kinds, that the barbers even save the croppings of beards, and the cuttings of nails, and sell them to farmers to enrich the soil.

Small cultivators in China often employ spade husbandry; and it is impossible not to admire the neat condition of their fields, from which they remove every weed with the most invincible patience. The ground must be bad and sterile indeed, if they cannot succeed in making it produce something. In places too dry for the culture of rice, they sow the sweet potato, hemp, and cotton; and if there is a corner quite unproductive, they plant in it some useful trees, the mulberry, the tallow tree, or at least some pines for turpentine. The Chinese farmer is incredibly anxious about his harvest; if he dreads that a violent wind may shake out the grains of rice by lashing the ears one against another, he binds several stalks together into a kind of sheaf, so as to make them afford each other a mutual support, and check the ravages of the wind. In irrigation also they display great industry, often carrying the water through bamboo tubes up the sides of mountains, which are cut into terraces, and cultivated to the very top. They have a thousand contrivances, in times of drought, to spread the waters of rivulets and ponds over their fields,

and enable them to flow off again when the inundation is too great. They make use chiefly of chain pumps, which they put in motion with their feet, and which send the water from one reservoir to another with great rapidity. Sometimes they fix at the edges of streams large wheels of extreme lightness, which a very slight current is sufficient to turn. These wheels are most ingeniously constructed, and surrounded with vessels that take up the water from the rivulets and pour it into large wooden tanks, whence it afterwards runs through little rills over the fields.

Many provinces are so fertile, and cultivated with so much care and skill, that three harvests a-year are regularly gathered. When the first is pretty well advanced, they sow the second in the intervals between the ridges, so that there are two different crops in the same field at the same time. All the cereals known in Europe are found in China, and even exhibit varieties not found elsewhere. In the north barley and wheat are more especially cultivated; and in the south, rice, which is the principal food of the lower classes, and the basis of aliment for all. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that throughout the Empire the Chinese live chiefly on rice; in the north and west it is not more used than in France. It is only seen on the tables of the rich, and then mostly on grand occasions. Wheat, buck-wheat, barley, Indian corn, millet, form the daily food of the people, except in the province of Kan-sou, where bread is made precisely as in Europe; everywhere else they spoil the wheaten flour, eating it in the state of unfermented half-done paste, sometimes in the shape of a bun, sometimes pulled out in ribbands like macaroni. Little loaves about the size of a

man's fist are occasionally made, but merely boiled in steam.

Besides possessing the cereals, fruits, and vegetables of Europe, China has also, in her vegetable kingdom, a rich variety of other productions, many of which would doubtless prosper in the south of France, and especially in our superb possessions in Africa. Amongst the most celebrated we must mention the bamboo, the numerous uses of which have had great influence on the habits of the Chinese. It is no exaggeration to say that the mines of China are less valuable to her than her bamboos ; and after the rice and silk, there is nothing that yields so great a revenue. The uses to which the bamboo is applied are so many and so important, that one can hardly conceive the existence of China without it. It issues from the ground like the asparagus, of the diameter that it afterwards remains when grown. The dictionary of Khang-hi defines it as, "a production that is neither tree nor grass" (*fei-tsao fei-mou*), that is an amphibious vegetable, sometimes a mere plant, and sometimes acquiring the proportions of a tree. The bamboo has been known from the remotest times in China, of which it is a native ; but the cultivation of the large kind dates only from the end of the third century before the Christian era. Sixty-three principal varieties of the bamboo are counted in the Empire ; they differ from one another in diameter, height, the distance of the knots, the colour, and the thickness of the wood, in their branches, leaves, and roots, as well as in peculiar and whimsical conformations which are perpetuated in certain species. A forest of bamboos will yield a considerable revenue to its proprietor, if he knows how to regulate the cutting. "The grand-

children of the bamboo," says the Chinese proverb, "never see their grandmother; but the mother is never separated from her children."

Among the useful and curious vegetable productions of China, exclusive of the object of the most active commerce — tea — may be counted the wax tree; the tallow tree; the paper mulberry; the *li-tchi*, or varnish tree; the *loun-gyen*, or dragon's eye; the jujube; the star anise; the cinnamon tree, of which the bark is very thick; the orange, of which there are many species; the medlar, and a number of other fruit trees peculiar to the southern provinces; the tree pæony; the camellia; the hortensia, brought from China by Lord Macartney; the small magnolia; many kinds of roses; the odori-ferous Queen Marguerite; the day lily; the rhubarb; the *jin-chen*, or ginseng; and a prodigious diversity of ligneous herbaceous plants, cultivated for the beauty of their flowers, as well as the cotton tree, and a great number of textile, economical, or cereal productions, which would deserve to be naturalised in Europe.

The cultivation of useful vegetables is a branch of industry to which the Chinese have always especially devoted themselves; and from the remotest epochs it has attracted the attention of the Government, and received much encouragement. In the most populous provinces even the rivulets and ponds have been turned to productive account, and nutritive aquatic plants, such as the tubers of the sagittarius and water-lily, of which the Chinese make such wonderful use, are sown in them.

The nymphæa, or water-lily, has always been a great favourite in China. The poets have celebrated it in their verses on account of the beauty of its flowers;

the Doctors of Reason have placed it among the ingredients for the elixir of immortality; and the economists have extolled it for its utility. At the present day, it has also become the symbol of the secret societies.

This plant, commonly called in China *lien-hoa*, has broad rounded leaves, scolloped at the edges, fleshy, full of veins, and sloping to the middle; some swim on the surface of the water, others rise above it to different heights. They are of a tender green on the upper surface, rather darker underneath, and supported by long stalks spotted with black. The root of the water-lily is longlived; it is as thick as your arm, and sometimes as much as twelve or fifteen feet long. The colour is pale yellow outside and milk-white within; and it lies along the bottom of the water, or attaches itself to the clay by bunches of fibres, which spring out at various distances along it. From the midst of these fibres it sometimes sends out shoots which increase its growth, but it commonly grows at the two ends. The stalks of both leaves and flowers are pierced quite to the extremity by holes rounded like those of the root, and symmetrically arranged along them.

The flowers of the water-lily have numerous petals, disposed in such a manner that when they are not completely open you might take them for large tulips; afterwards they expand into a rose-like form. In the middle of the flower is a large conical pistil, which becomes a rounded, spongy fruit, divided throughout its length into cells full of oblong seeds, enveloped in a kind of shell like the acorn, and composed like it of two white lobes, between which is the germ. The stamens are very delicate filaments terminating in violet-coloured anthers.

The Chinese distinguish four kinds of water-lily, the yellow, the white, the red, and the pink, the three latter sometimes with single flowers, sometimes with double. This plant may be propagated by seeds, but more easily and rapidly by roots ; it does not require any kind of culture, and there is nothing comparable to the effect produced by this splendid flower on the ponds and basins of China. It does not bud till towards the end of May, but its germination is very rapid, and its great leaves lying on the surface of the water or raised majestically to various heights, form a covering of most exquisite verdure, the beauty of which is of course enhanced, when it is enamelled by flowers of various dyes. They are larger than poppies, and their dazzling tints are beautifully relieved by the green leaves. The young Chinese poets are particularly fond of celebrating the beauty of the water-lily gleaming in the moonlight as the boats row about the basins illumined by swarms of glow-worms and fire-flies.

The water-lily is very remarkable, too, in a utilitarian point of view. Its seeds are eaten as nuts are in Europe, and boiled in sugar and water they are considered delicious by epicures. The gigantic root is a great resource for culinary preparations, and in whatever way it is dressed, it is always excellent and wholesome. The Chinese pickle great quantities of it with salt and vinegar, to eat with rice ; reduced to a powder it is extremely agreeable when boiled with milk or water, and in the summer it is eaten raw like fruit, and is very refreshing. Finally, the leaves are constantly made use of instead of paper for wrapping up all kinds of things, and when dried are often mixed with tobacco, to render it a little milder.

The Chinese owe their numerous discoveries in agriculture principally to their eminently observant character, which has enabled them to turn to use an immense number of plants neglected in Europe. They are very fond of the study of nature, and their greatest men, and even their Emperors, do not disdain to attend to the smallest circumstances connected with it, and to collect with care whatever promises to be of public utility. The celebrated Emperor Khang-hi has thus rendered an important service to his country. We find in the curious memoirs written by that prince the following passage — “I was walking,” says the Emperor Khang-hi, “on the first day of the sixth moon, in some fields where rice was sown, which was not expected to yield its harvest till the ninth. I happened to notice a rice plant that had already come into ear; it rose above all the rest, and was already ripe. I had it gathered and brought to me; the grain was very fine and full, and I was induced to keep it for an experiment, and see whether it would on the following year retain this precocity, and in fact it did. All the plants that proceeded from it came into ear before the ordinary time, and yielded their harvest in the sixth moon. Every year has multiplied the produce of the preceding, and now for thirty years it has been the rice served on my table. The grain is long, and of a rather reddish colour, but of a sweet perfume, and very pleasant flavour. It has been named *ya-mi*, or ‘Imperial rice,’ because it was in my gardens that it was first cultivated. It is the only kind that can ripen north of the Great Wall, where the cold begins very early, and ends very late, but in the provinces of the south, where the climate is milder, and the soil more fertile, it is easy to

obtain two harvests a-year from it, and it is a sweet consolation to me to have procured this advantage for my people."

The Emperor Khang-hi did render in fact an immense service to the populations of Mantchuria, by encouraging the culture of this new kind of rice, which succeeds admirably in dry countries, and has no need, like the common rice, of perpetual irrigation. It would certainly prosper in France, and it is not the fault of the missionaries if it has not long since been acclimated there.

Whilst we were at the mission in the environs of Pekin, we several times made it our business to send some of it to the ministers of agriculture and commerce, but we have never heard that any experiment was tried with it. How indeed could it be expected that with our perpetual revolutions and rapid changes of government, a minister could preserve sufficient tranquillity of mind to occupy himself with a new kind of rice discovered by a Mantchoo-Tartar Emperor.

The observant spirit with which the Chinese are gifted in the highest degree, has led them to make a curious remark concerning corn, which is, in their opinion, of the greatest importance. One of our Christian converts asked us one day, if in France the kinds of corn that flower in the night were very numerous. The question puzzled us, and we were obliged to confess that not being agriculturists, we did not know that any species flowered in the night, that we had never heard the phenomenon mentioned, and that probably, even the farmers of our country would know no more about it than we did. "Oh, no!" he exclaimed, "your cultivators must know that, or how could they carry on

their agricultural labours with success. Do they sow their fields at random without paying any attention to the sun and moon?" For the second time we were forced to avow our profound ignorance, and thereupon our neophyte began to explain to us some most curious theories connected with the blooming of corn. He told us that the numerous kinds of corn were all ranged under two categories, one of which invariably began to flower in the night, and the other no less invariably in the day. "The choice of the ground, the time for sowing, and the kind of culture, should," he said, "be varied according to the species;" and he maintained that for want of being acquainted with these two classifications, and conforming to the rules derivable from them, people must expose themselves to the risk of having very bad harvests.

We cannot undertake to say how far this observation is correct, and we must own we never had sufficient zeal in the cause of agricultural science to spend a night in a corn field in order to mount guard over the ears, and catch in the fact those that should take it into their heads to blow. Indeed we are not sure that even if we had, we should have been much the forwarder, for we should very likely not have been able to perceive the flowering of an ear of corn, if it did take place. We must therefore leave it to those better informed to decide on the value of this Chinese observation.

A very curious and original collection might be made of the remarks of the Chinese, not only on agriculture, but also on many other branches of natural history. We will mention a few that we happen to remember, in order to give an idea of the sagacity of this people.

Everybody knows that swallows go away in the

autumn, and return in the spring, and the Chinese have been as curious as ourselves to know what became of them during their six months of absence, and where they went to. It had been ascertained that swallows, on whose claws certain marks had been made to know them by, returned several successive years to the same house; it was therefore certain that those that went away in the autumn were the same that had returned in the spring. But where did they go to? The ancients supposed that they passed beyond the seas, and others even that they plunged beneath the waters; but these opinions are regarded by the Chinese as puerile fables, and several observations have demonstrated to them, that swallows do not, as is supposed, undertake long journeys, in order to go and pass the winter in some warm country. It is written in the annals of China that "the people being overwhelmed by the misfortunes that afflicted them during the reign of the Emperor Ngan-ty, more than a thousand families deserted their villages, and went to seek a refuge in the wildest mountain solitudes, in order to escape the horrors of insurrection and famine. As there were no vegetable crops they were reduced to feed on rats and swallows, which they found collected in masses in the caverns and hollows of the rocks." Another historian reports the following analogous fact: "The Emperor Yang-ty having ordered some repairs on the banks of the Yellow River, there were found immense multitudes of swallows collected in the holes and caves of the rocks, and wherever the shore was steep and solitary." A Chinese naturalist, named Luchi, says, after reporting these circumstances —

"The ancients thought that swallows changed their climate, but it is difficult to imagine how they should

have done so, since no one has ever seen them set out in the direction of southern countries, nor proceed in troops, like the migratory birds that come every year from Tartary, and return thither in the spring. These draw themselves up into regular armies, and their passage lasts several days, whilst the swallows, when they disappear from one province, are not seen in any greater numbers in the other, even in the provinces nearest the sea ;” and the Chinese naturalist concludes that the swallows do not emigrate, but remain always about the same country, and that during the winter they merely hide themselves in holes and caverns. We do not know what the naturalists of Europe may say to this account. The following anecdote, illustrative of another Chinese observation, will, we fear, not be to their taste any more than to that of the clockmakers.

One day when we went to pay a visit to some families of Chinese Christian peasants, we met, near a farm, a young lad, who was taking a buffalo to graze along our path. We asked him carelessly, as we passed, whether it was yet noon. The child raised his head to look at the sun, but it was hidden behind thick clouds, and he could read no answer there. “The sky is so cloudy,” said he, “but wait a moment;” and with these words he ran towards the farm, and came back a few minutes afterwards with a cat in his arms. “Look here,” said he; “it is not noon yet;” and he showed us the cat’s eyes, by pushing up the lids with his hands. We looked at the child with surprise, but he was evidently in earnest: and the cat, though astonished, and not much pleased at the experiment made on her eyes, behaved with most exemplary complaisance. “Very well,” said we; “thank you;” and he then let

go the cat, who made her escape pretty quickly, and we continued our route.

To say the truth, we had not at all understood the proceeding; but we did not wish to question the little pagan, lest he should find out that we were Europeans by our ignorance. As soon as ever we reached the farm, however, we made haste to ask our Christians whether they could tell the clock by looking into a cat's eyes. They seemed surprised at the question; but as there was no danger in confessing to them our ignorance of the properties of the cat's eyes, we related what had just taken place. That was all that was necessary; our complaisant neophytes immediately gave chase to all the cats in the neighbourhood. They brought us three or four, and explained in what manner they might be made use of for watches. They pointed out that the pupil of their eyes went on constantly growing narrower until twelve o'clock, when they became like a fine line, as thin as a hair, drawn perpendicularly across the eye, and that after twelve the dilatation recommenced.

When we had attentively examined the eyes of all the cats at our disposal, we concluded that it was past noon, as all the eyes perfectly agreed upon the point.

We have had some hesitation in speaking of this Chinese discovery, as it may, doubtless, tend to injure the interests of the clock-making trade, and interfere with the sale of watches; but all considerations must give way to the spirit of progress. All important discoveries tend in the first instance to injure private interests, and we hope, nevertheless, that watches will continue to be made, because, among the number of persons who may wish to know the hour, there will, most likely, be some who will not give themselves the trouble to run

after the cat, or who may fear some danger to their own eyes from too close an examination of hers.

The Chinese have also given us the benefit of their experience in another similar case, which is not liable to the inconveniences of the preceding, and has no tendency to compromise any industrial interest. At most it could only be disagreeable to asses, by somewhat restraining them in the exercise of their free will. In the north of China, where travelling by water is not so easy as in the south, it is very common to make journeys in waggons, or on the backs of asses or mules. You stop every evening, and pass the night at one of the more or less comfortable hostelries which, such as they are, you never fail to meet with on every road. The great inconvenience of these inns is their intolerable noisiness, which makes it a very hard matter to get a night's rest in them. If, unfortunately, there should be any asses in the court-yard of the establishment, you may as well make up your mind at once not to close your eyes, for these terrible animals, doubtless under pretence that music has always been held in honour in the Empire, think themselves obliged, as good Chinese subjects, to sing the whole night long, and yield to all the caprices of their philharmonic instincts.

In 1840, we were once making a journey in a waggon in the province of Pekin. Our equipage was under the guidance of one of our catechists, an old schoolmaster, mounted on a magnificent ass, so full of ardour and agility, that the two mules who completed our team had all the difficulty in the world to keep up with him. This ass, however, was so filled with the sense of his own superiority, and so proud of it, that whenever he became aware of the presence of any of his brethren,

let them be at ever so great a distance, he never failed to begin boasting of it in such loud and sonorous tones, that his folly became quite insupportable. When we got to an inn, instead of trying to rest himself, this indefatigable beast passed the whole night in practising his music; and there appeared to be something so peculiarly provoking in the tones of his voice, that all the asses within hearing, influenced, it would seem, by the power of some magnetic fluid, were quite sure to respond in a magnificent bravura, so that, altogether, it became impossible to close our eyes.

One evening, when our catechist was vaunting the qualities of his ass, we could not help interrupting him. "Your ass," said we, "is an abominable brute. During the whole journey he has prevented our getting a wink of sleep."

"Why did not you tell me so before?" said the catechist; "I would soon have stopped his singing." As the ancient schoolmaster was somewhat of a wag, and indulged occasionally in a small joke, we took little notice of his reply, but that night we slept quite soundly.

"Well, did the ass make a noise last night?" said he, when we met in the morning.

"Perhaps not; at all events we certainly did not hear him."

"No, no; I think not; I saw to that before I went to bed. You must have noticed," he continued, "that when an ass is going to bray, he always begins by raising his tail, and he keeps it extended horizontally as long as his song lasts. To ensure his silence, therefore, you have only to tie a large stone to the end of his tail, so that he cannot raise it."

We smiled, without reply, thinking this was another piece of pleasantry ; but he cried, " Come, now, and see ; you can easily convince yourselves." And accordingly we followed him to the court-yard, where we beheld, sure enough, the poor ass with a large stone attached to his tail, and with the air of having entirely lost his accustomed spirits. His eyes were fixed on the ground, his ears hung down, his whole appearance denoted humility and dejection. We felt quite compassionate towards him, and begged his master to untie the stone directly ; and, as soon as ever he felt his musical appendage at liberty, the creature raised, first his head, then his ears, then his tail, and at last began to bray with all his wonted enthusiasm.

CHAP. IX.

NAVIGATION OF THE POU-YANG.—GREAT NUMBER OF JUNKS.—
 DESERT TRACTS.—PAUPERISM IN CHINA.—BANDS OF MENDICANTS.
 —SOCIETY FOR GRATUITOUS COFFINS.—THE KING OF THE BEGGARS.
 —THE HENS' FEATHERS INN.—CAUSES OF PAUPERISM.—GAMING.
 —VARIOUS CHINESE GAMES.—MODE OF ELUDING THE LAW
 AGAINST GAMBLERS.—DRUNKENNESS.—THE VINE, WINE, AND
 CORN BRANDY.—INFANTICIDE.—ITS CAUSES.—TRUTH AND EX-
 AGGERATION CONCERNING INFANTICIDE IN CHINA.—YU-YNG-TANG,
 OR FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.—EDICT AGAINST INFANTICIDE.—WORK
 OF THE HOLY INFANCY.

OUR navigation on the lake Pou-yang was performed without accident; but it was much slower than we had anticipated, for instead of one day's journey we had two. We had not gone more than half way when the wind changed, and began to blow right a-head, so that we were compelled to make some long tacks. The weather continued fine, however, and the breeze, though contrary, was not of a nature to give us the smallest uneasiness. One day's delay was of no consequence; but we cannot say that passing another night on board the junk was quite so much a matter of indifference. The kakkerlacs made war upon us with the same fury as on the night before, but we got rid of this annoyance by having our beds carried up on deck, and lying down among the sailors—for their

perpetual noise and gossip was, at any rate, less of a nuisance than the torments of the kakkerlacs.

During these two days we seldom saw land, and we could hardly persuade ourselves that we were really in the centre of the Chinese Empire. The immense extent of water—the long waves raised by the wind—the large vessels that were moving about in all directions, made it look more like a sea than a lake. The innumerable junks that are constantly ploughing the surface of the Pou-yang make really a very pretty sight. They are of very various construction, and the different points to which they are proceeding occasion a great variety in the arrangement of their sails. Some are going before the wind, with all their matting majestically displayed, others are struggling painfully with wind and wave, and great numbers crossing, rapidly, this way and that, in contrary directions, and looking like marine monsters, chasing each other. The evolutions of all these floating machines were so swift and various that the picture changed every moment.

We might have gone by water as far as the capital of Kiang-si, for on leaving the lake Pou-yang, we entered the mouth of a navigable river that passes under the walls of *Nan-tchang-fou*; but with the wind and current against us, the navigation would have been too laborious and tedious.

We preferred, therefore, resuming, by land, the journey that was to bring us in two days to our third great halt.

The province of Kiang-si is regarded as one of the most populous in China, and we were therefore greatly surprised to observe on our route vast plains without cultivation, and without inhabitants, the wild and

dreary aspect of which reminded us of the steppes and deserts of Mongolia. It is not uncommon in China to meet with desolate tracts of this kind, whether on account of the barrenness of the soil, or from the thoughtless carelessness of the people of the locality, who prefer seeking a more precarious subsistence from the chances of trade and navigation, to trusting to the peaceful labours of the field. These fallow grounds are most common in the neighbourhood of the great lakes, and on the banks of rivers. The inhabitants leave the land when they can, and go and pass their lives in the boats, so that it has often been thought that notwithstanding the encouragement given to agriculture, China could yet supply more completely the wants of her inhabitants, or support a greater number of them.

It is certain that the Chinese government does not know how to turn to account all the elements of abundance and riches that are met with in this magnificent country. An intelligent administration, zealous for the public good, by guiding judiciously this patient and industrious population, might develope prodigiously the immense resources of the Empire, and procure for the masses a much larger share of prosperity and comfort.

We will not venture to say it is easier in China than elsewhere completely to extinguish pauperism. In all the great centres of population, there will always be, unfortunately, many extremely poor, and the class of the necessitous will be always considerable. But the number of these might certainly be diminished; and we have noticed during our residence in China, that it is every year on the increase. This circumstance

may, perhaps, help to explain the astonishing facility and rapid progress of the formidable insurrection that is threatening at this moment totally to overthrow this colossal Empire.

At all epochs, and in the most flourishing and best governed countries, there always have been, and there always will be, poor; but unquestionably there can be found in no other country such a depth of disastrous poverty as in the Celestial Empire. Not a year passes in which a terrific number of persons do not perish of famine in some part or other of China; and the multitude of those who live merely from day to day is incalculable. Let a drought, an inundation, or any accident whatever, occur to injure the harvest in a single province, and two thirds of the population are immediately reduced to a state of starvation. You see them then forming themselves into numerous bands—perfect armies of beggars—and proceeding together, men, women, and children, to seek in the towns and villages for some little nourishment wherewith to sustain, for a brief interval, their miserable existence. Many fall down fainting by the wayside, and die before they can reach the place where they had hoped to find help. You see their bodies lying in the fields, and at the road-side, and you pass without taking much notice of them,—so familiar is the horrid spectacle.

In 1849, we were stopped for six months in a Christian community of the province of Tche-kiang, first by the torrents of rain that fell, and then by a general inundation over all that part of the country. It had the appearance of a vast sea, on the surface of which trees and villages were floating. The Chinese, who foresaw already the destruction of the harvest,

and all the horrors of famine, displayed the most remarkable industry and perseverance in struggling against the misfortune from which they were suffering. After having tried to raise dykes round their fields, they next attempted to drain off the water by which they were filled; but just when they seemed on the point of succeeding in their difficult and toilsome undertaking, the rain again came pouring down, and their fields were once more covered. For three whole months we witnessed their unceasing industry; their labours were never discontinued for a moment. The unfortunate creatures, standing in mud and water up to their hips, were occupied, day and night, in working at their chain pumps, in order to turn into the beds of the rivers and canals the waters that were desolating the country. The inundation could not be mastered, however; and after all their exhausting labour, the poor sufferers were compelled to abandon the cultivation of their fields, and found themselves in a complete state of destitution. Then they began to assemble in great bands, and wander about the province with bags on their backs, begging here and there for a little rice. They were hideous to look at; half covered with rags, their hair bristling, their features contracted, their lips livid; and these but lately peaceful and industrious peasants were evidently driven by despair to be ready for every excess.

The Christian community in which we lived was several times visited by these famishing hordes; and though we were but little richer than they, it was necessary to retrench something even from our necessities, in order to be able to bestow a few handfuls of rice on them. Whole villages were abandoned, and

numerous families went to seek a subsistence in the neighbouring provinces.

Calamities of this kind occur every year in some place or other; and those who have made any savings are able to get through the crisis, and wait for better days; but the others, who are always in much greater numbers, have no choice but to expatriate themselves, or die of famine.

Besides these local and accidental miseries, there is also what may be called a fixed and permanent pauperism, which like an incurable leprosy extends its ravages over the whole nation. In the great towns the multitude of paupers is terrific. You see them continually, crawling through the streets, displaying their deformities, their hideous wounds, their dislocated limbs, to excite public commiseration. Every day many are starved to death.

The Chinese who are in easy circumstances do not object to bestow a few sapecks in alms, but they know nothing of the feeling of charity that induces any one to interest themselves in the poor—to love them, and compassionate their distresses. They give a handful of rice, or a piece of money, to the sick and unfortunate, merely to rid themselves of their presence; but further than this, no one troubles himself about these miserable creatures, or inquires whether they have any corner in which to obtain shelter to pass a night. The poor have no home; they go and crouch somewhere about the tribunals or pagodas, or they lie along the ramparts, where they construct wretched little hovels with fragments of matting that they have picked up on the wayside.

The Chinese, so ready and skilful at organising every

kind of society that has any commercial or industrial object in view, or even for resisting thieves, or the enticements of the gaming table, have never yet formed any benevolent society for the solace of the sick and the unfortunate, with the single exception of a society to provide coffins gratis for the dead who have no relatives to undertake their funerals.

As for this, though it is scarcely allowable to scrutinise the motives of those who perform any good action, it is impossible not to doubt whether at bottom this does not owe its origin to a self-interested motive. It is a superstition among the Chinese that the souls of the dead are often changed into evil spirits, devils, who take pleasure in tormenting the living, in creating diseases in them, or interfering with them in various ways to their prejudice. The best means of averting the malignant influences of these evil disposed spirits, who are mostly so implacable against the living, because their bodies have been deprived of sepulture, is of course to buy coffins for those who die without having the means of obtaining burial. This benevolent attention cannot it is supposed fail to dispose them favourably towards the members of the society for gratuitous coffins. With the exception of this we have never heard in China of any society, instituted with the purpose of providing for the wants of the indigent.

If, however, the opulent classes neglect to associate for the benefit of the poor, the poor do not fail in retribution to form companies for taking advantage of the rich. Every one brings to the common stock some infirmity real or supposed, and this formidable capital of human misery is turned as far as possible to profitable account. The poor are formed into companies, re-

giments, and batallions, and this great army of paupers has a chief, who bears the title of "King of the Beggars," and who is actually recognised by the State. He is responsible for the conduct of his tattered subjects, and it is on him the blame is laid when any disorders occur among them that are too outrageous and dangerous to public peace to be endured. The King of the Beggars at Pekin is a real power. There are certain days on which he is authorised to send into the country some of his numerous phalanxes and bid them ask alms, or rather maraud all over the environs of the capital. The pencil of Callot would be necessary to paint the burlesque, disorderly, scandalous appearance of this army of vagabonds, marching proudly to the conquest of some village. Whilst they swarm about like some devastating insects, and seek by their insolence to intimidate every one they meet, their king calls a meeting of the principal inhabitants, and proposes for a certain sum to deliver them from the hideous invasion. After a long dispute the contracting parties come to an agreement, the village pays its ransom, and the beggars decamp to go and pour down like an avalanche upon some other place.

These hordes sometimes reap tolerably abundant harvests in their expeditions, but every thing goes first into the hands of the king, and he afterwards makes the distribution among his subjects, who, without having read a line of Cabot, or Victor Considérant, appear to have made great progress in their theories. These grand new ideas are not monopolised by Europeans, and many people will no doubt feel somewhat humiliated on being told that the Asiatics, the Chinese even, have been for a long time reducing to practice opinions supposed to have

burst forth but yesterday from the powerful brains of the philosophers of the West.

There exists at Peking a phalanstery which surpasses in eccentricity all that the fertile imagination of Fourier could have conceived. It is called *Ki-mao-fan*, that is, "House of the Hens' Feathers." By dint of carrying out the laws of progress, the Chinese have found means to furnish to the poorest of the community a warm feather-bed, for the small consideration of one fifth of a farthing per night. This marvellous establishment is simply composed of one great hall, and the floor of this great hall is covered over its whole extent by one vast thick layer of feathers. Mendicants and vagabonds who have no other domicile come to pass the night in this immense dormitory. Men, women, and children, old and young, all without exception, are admitted. Communism prevails in the full force and rigour of the expression. Every one settles himself and makes his nest as well as he can for the night in this ocean of feathers; when day dawns he must quit the premises, and an officer of the company stands at the door to receive the rent of one sapeck each for the night's lodging. In deference no doubt to the principle of equality, half-places are not allowed, and a child must pay the same as a grown person.

On the first establishment of this eminently philanthropic and moral institution, the managers of it used to furnish each of the guests with a covering, but it was found necessary to modify this regulation, for the communist company got into the habit of carrying off their coverlets to sell them, or to supply an additional garment during the rigorous cold of winter. The shareholders saw that this would never do, and they should

be ruined, yet to give no covering at all would have been too cruel, and scarcely decent. It was necessary therefore to find some method of reconciling the interests of the establishment with the comfort of the guests, and the way in which the problem was solved was this.

An immense felt coverlet, of such gigantic dimensions as to cover the whole dormitory, was made, and in the day time suspended to the ceiling like a great canopy. When every body had gone to bed, that is to say, had laid down upon the feathers, the counterpane was let down by pulleys, the precaution having been previously taken to make a number of holes in it for the sleepers to put their heads through, in order to escape the danger of suffocation. As soon as it is daylight, the phalansterian coverlet is hoisted up again, after a signal has been made on the tam-tam to awaken those who are asleep, and invite them to draw their heads back into the feathers in order not to be caught by the neck and hoisted into the air with the coverlet. This immense swarm of beggars is then seen crawling about in the sea of dirty feathers and inserting themselves again into their miserable rags, preparatory to gathering into groups and dispersing about the various quarters of the town to seek by lawful or unlawful means their scanty subsistence.

Amongst the principal causes of pauperism in China may be mentioned, besides the excessive carelessness of the government and the exuberance of the population, gambling, drunkenness and debauchery. These vices of course are not peculiar to China; they have been known in all ages and countries, and have always brought disorder and misery in their train. It is true, however, that the Chinese give themselves up to them with

a passion never exceeded among any nation that has ever existed.

Gaming is prohibited by the laws of the Empire, but all legislation on this subject has been overpowered by the habits of the people, and China is now in fact one vast gaming-house. Chinese games are very numerous; they play at cards, chess, draughts, dice, and tsei-mei, a game similar to the Italian morra. He who loses is obliged to pay a cup of brandy. The Chinese are also passionately fond of cock-fights as well as of combats between crickets, grasshoppers, &c., and these interesting amusements always give occasion to wagers, often to a considerable amount. Habitual gamblers prefer cards and dice; they assemble both in private houses, and in public establishments, a good deal like our *cafés*, except that nothing but tea is drunk in them. There they pass days and nights, playing with so much passion, that they scarcely give themselves time even to take their food. There is not a village that has not its gaming-house, and its professed gamesters.

The Chinese are, as we have said, industrious and economical, but their cupidity, their immoderate love of lucre, and their decided taste for stockjobbing and speculation, easily tempts them to gambling, when they are not engaged in traffic. They seek eagerly for strong excitements, and when once they have got into the habit of gambling they seldom or never recover from it. They cast aside every obligation of station, duty, and family, to live only for cards and dice; and this fatal passion gains such an empire over them, that they proceed even to the most revolting extremities. When they have lost all their money, they will play for their houses, their land, and their wives even, whose destiny often

depends on a cast of the dice. Nay, the Chinese gambler does not stop here, for he will stake the very clothes he has on for one game more, and this horrible custom gives rise to scenes that would not be credible, did we not know that the passions always tend to render men cruel and inhuman.

In the northern provinces, especially in the environs of the Great Wall, you may sometimes meet, during the most intense cold of winter, men running about in a state of complete nudity, having been driven pitilessly from the gaming houses when they had lost their all. They rush about in all directions like madmen to try and save themselves from being frozen, or crouch down against the chimneys, which in those countries are carried along the walls of the houses, on a level with the ground. They turn first one side towards the warmth, then the other, while their gambling companions, far from trying to help them, look on with ferocious and malignant hilarity. The horrible spectacle seldom lasts long, for the cold soon seizes the unfortunate creatures, and they fall down and die. The gamblers then return to their table, and begin to play again with the most perfect composure. Such facts as these will appear fabulous to many persons, but having resided several years in the north of China, we can testify to their perfect authenticity.

These excesses seem surprising enough, but the truth is, that Chinese gamblers have invented still more extraordinary methods of satisfying their passion, which is really carried to absolute madness. Those who have nothing more to lose will collect round a table and actually play for *their fingers*, which they will cut off reciprocally with frightful stoicism. We had thought to pass

over these revolting particulars, for we do not like to put the confidence of our readers to too great a trial. We have a strong objection to relating things that, although we know them to be strictly true, have an improbable appearance. But these facts concerning Chinese gamblers were known, and commented upon by the Arab travellers in the ninth century. Here is a passage on the subject from the "Chain of Chronicles," from which we have already quoted more than once:—

"Amongst men of a volatile and boastful character, those who belong to the lower classes, and who have no money, will sometimes play for the fingers of their hands. During the game, they keep by them a vase containing nut, or sesame oil, for olive oil is not known in this country. A fire is kept burning under it, and between the two players is placed a small but very sharp hatchet. The one who wins then takes the hand of the loser, places it on a stone, and cuts off one of his fingers with the hatchet; the piece falls, and the vanquished party immediately dips his hand into the hot oil, which cauterises the wound. This operation does not prevent the players from beginning again. Some will take a match, dip it in oil, place it on their arms, and set fire to it; the match burns, and you can smell the odour of the consuming flesh, but the man goes on with his game, and exhibits no sign of pain."

All players, as may be supposed, do not cut off their fingers and roast their arms, and even in China gambling is not always carried to these insane excesses; but throughout the Empire, it is the cause of great misery, and nothing is more common than to see nume-

rous families reduced to wretched indigence by the consequences of a few games of cards or dice. The evil has become so general, that the laws are powerless against it. In vain do the magistrates make eloquent proclamations against gamblers, and quote passages from the most celebrated moralists, in support of their fine speeches; nobody plays a game the less in any province of the Empire. The magistrates themselves, in some measure, teach the people to disregard the laws; they often visit the villages under pretence of seeking for gamblers, when in fact they are insuring them perfect impunity, simply on condition of being paid for their connivance. On their arrival, a good dinner is given to them, as well as a larger or smaller ingot of silver; and then they continue their tour, after having duly exhorted the villagers to persevere in the observance of the five social duties.

We once knew a Mandarin who objected to have money offered to him when he went on a search for gamblers. His sentiments were so noble, so elevated, that the mere idea of receiving a present from the people under his jurisdiction excited his anger and indignation. He loved money, nevertheless. How could he have been a Mandarin if he did not? He liked to get it, but he was particular about having it offered in a manner that should not wound the delicacy of his sentiments. When he came to a place, he always managed to make it understood what sum he was to receive, and then the way was, for the principal person in the town, or village, to invite him to take tea, and after that, to play a game or two; at which games the Mandarin was to be allowed to win. But it was necessary for those who played with him to affect to be

paying great attention, and trying to get the game, for this worthy magistrate was not satisfied unless he had the gain and the glory too, and chose to have both his pockets filled and his skill admired.

The passion for gambling has now invaded all classes of society in China ; men, women, and children—everybody plays—but the lower classes are certainly the most inveterate and determined gamblers. In almost every street of a great town, you meet little ambulatory gaming-tables ; a pair of dice in a cup placed upon a stool form an almost irresistible attraction to the workman returning from his daily labour, and when once he has yielded to the temptations of this fascinating display, he finds it afterwards still more difficult to withstand them. He often loses the whole of his hard earnings in a few hours. Children, too, crowd round the tables as eagerly as their parents, and the old people are very often the first to urge them down the abyss from which they can scarcely ever rise again.

Drunkenness is also in China a cause of pauperism, scarcely less efficient than the passion for gaming ; but this vice does not create quite as much misery in the south as in the north of the Empire, though the case is the reverse with the passion for gaming, as the southern Chinese drink less but play more. It is, of course, not their habitual beverage—tea—that intoxicates them, but a variety of alcoholic liquors which are very popular, and within every one's reach.

The grape has been known in China, and celebrated from the remotest antiquity. The learned assert that the descriptions of the Imperial Gardens in the *Tcheouky*—a work attributed to the celebrated *Tcheou-long*, who ascended the throne in the year 1122 before

Christ — can only refer to the vine ; and however this may be there is no doubt that there were many vines in the provinces of Chen-si and Chan-si ages before the Christian era. The historian Sse-ma-tsien speaks of a certain rich man who had a vineyard so considerable that he made every year 10,000 measures of wine. “The wine of grapes,” he adds, “having the property of keeping many years, it used to be put into urns and buried.” At this time wine was very common, and caused a good deal of mischief. The numerous songs composed under the dynasties of the Yuen and Han are a proof that the Chinese have not always disdained the juice of the grape ; and the Emperor, Ouen-ty has sung of it with a lyric enthusiasm worthy of Anacreon or Horace.

According to the testimony of the Annals, the vine, like everything else in China, has undergone many revolutions. When at various times the government has given orders for cutting down the trees, the multitude of which was supposed to injure the corn, the vine has not been excepted ; on the contrary, it has sometimes been specially pointed out, and pitilessly sacrificed to the culture of cereals. Under some reigns the extirpation of the vine was so complete in certain provinces, that the very remembrance of it was lost ; and subsequently, when permission was given to plant it again, you might suppose from the manner in which some historians express themselves that the vine was becoming known for the first time. This is probably what gave rise to the idea that the vine was only cultivated in China at a comparatively recent period, and that it came from the West, though it is really indisputable that it was known to the Chinese long

before the Christian era. The Annals contain accounts of various species that were brought from Samarcand, Persia, Thibet, Tourfan, Hami, and other countries, with which China has had relations. It would even be easy to show that grape wine was in use under every dynasty, and every reign to the 15th century. At present there still exists in China several excellent kinds of grapes, and the three first of the Mantchoo Emperors, Khang-hi, Yoang-tching, and Khien-long, sent for a great number of new plants from foreign countries, and have in their works taken credit to themselves for doing so. The Chinese of our day, however, do not cultivate the vine on a large scale, and do not make wine of grapes; the fruit is only gathered for eating either fresh or dried. The immense population of China, and the consequent necessity of reserving the land for food, occasions the vine to be neglected, and its products regarded as objects of luxury.

In default of grape wine, the Chinese manufacture a spirituous liquor from corn, and make a great consumption of it. The most commonly used is that obtained from the fermentation of rice. It is a kind of beer, the taste of which is sometimes very agreeable; that of the best quality comes from Chao-hing, in the province of Tche-kiang. As it is made from rice, the Europeans resident at Macao and Canton generally pronounce it detestable; but they are always disposed to judge *à priori* of Chinese productions. One day we took it into our heads to fill some bottles with it, and, having first sealed them with great care, we offered them to an English connoisseur in wine. He tasted, and not only found it excellent, but discovered that it was the produce of some celebrated vintage in Spain.

He served it at dessert to some of his countrymen, who pronounced a high eulogium upon it, and perceived in it the true flavour and *bouquet* of Spanish wines.

It must be owned, however, that this rice-wine was of quite exceptional quality; that which is drunk commonly in China is not very agreeable, and though containing but little alcohol, easily gets into your head. The Chinese were acquainted with this manufacture at least twenty centuries before the Christian era.

In order to procure the fermentation of the rice, they place it in large jars, and mix it with a certain leaven, to which they give the name of "mother of wine." This leaven is made with the flour of good wheat, in which all the bran has been left. This flour is mixed with warm water, and then kneaded into a mass rather firmer than bread dough. It is then placed in wooden moulds, and made into masses of the shape of a brick, and weighing four or five pounds. These are ranged on a board, and placed in a chamber hermetically closed, and left to ferment. The makers know when the fermentation is finished by a reddish colour reaching the centre of the loaves. They are then exposed to the air to dry, and in this state become articles of commerce. When this yeast has been properly made it is rather better for being old, and even the maggots that get into it do it no great harm, though the makers try to keep them off by placing aromatic herbs between the loaves. The preparation of this yeast requires great care and practice; and the goodness of the wine depends on the quality of the yeast employed. In the north of China millet is used instead of rice. The "mother of wine" being only corn flour fermented, acidified and dried, it may be made equally well with

oats, rye, or barley; and the flour of peas or beans is sometimes mixed with it, as well as odoriferous herbs, almonds, the leaves and bark of trees, and fruits dried and reduced to powder. Every locality has a different receipt.

Corn brandy was not known in China at so ancient a date as wine. The use of it does not seem to have been earlier than the end of the 13th century. Before that epoch the Chinese were not acquainted with the process of distillation. The first person, it is said, who made corn brandy was only trying to correct the bad taste of some old wine, by passing it through a still, and he was much surprised to find that his process had produced a spirit. For a long time spirits were only made from wine, and the possibility of making alcohol from grain was found out by mere chance. A peasant of the province of Chang-tong, who wished to make a large quantity of wine, found that the millet had not been properly stirred, and that instead of fermenting it had become mouldy. Not being able, therefore, to use it for wine, he thought he would try and make brandy of it, and his experiment succeeded perfectly. Since then his method has been adopted, and a great many useless manipulations thus spared.

The brandies of the north are made principally with large millet (*holcus sorghum*). There exist considerable manufactories where its product is passed several times through the still, and thus obtains the strength and energy of alcohol. These liquors always retain an unpleasant taste; but it may be got rid of by macerating green fruits or aromatic herbs in them. The Chinese, however, do not care about these niceties; they drink it with avidity; and they are so little in

the habit of drinking anything cold, that they have even their brandy served up to them smoking hot. At the inns they bring and place on the table of their guests a little urn filled with brandy, and a miniature tripod, in the centre of which is a small china bowl. Into this they pour some spirit, and set light to it, and then place the urn upon it ; so that you have the pleasure of keeping your alcohol hot as long as you remain at table.

This horrible drink is the delight of the Chinese, and especially of those of the north, who swallow it like water. Many ruin themselves with brandy, as others do with gaming. In company, or even alone, they will pass whole days and nights in drinking successive little cups of it, until their intoxication makes them incapable of carrying the cup to their lips. When this passion has once seized on the head of a family, poverty, with all its lugubrious train, very soon makes its entrance into the house.

It is unfortunately the custom for the distilleries to supply brandy on credit for a whole year, so that a tippler may go on for a long time drawing from this inexhaustible spring. His troubles will only begin in the last moon — the legal period of payment. Then indeed he must pay, and with usury ; and as money does not usually become more plentiful with a man from the habit of getting drunk every day, he has to sell his house and his land, if he have any, or to carry his furniture and his clothes to the pawnbroker's.

One can hardly imagine what pleasure the Chinese find in imbibing these burning drinks, which are absolutely like liquid fire, and, moreover, very ill tasted. But many instances have been mentioned to us of their

having died a fiery death for the sake of it; of men who have absorbed such a quantity of alcohol as to have become fairly saturated with it, and to have, in a manner, exhaled it at every pore. The slightest accident then, perhaps in merely lighting a pipe, has been sufficient to envelope in flames and consume these wretched creatures. We have not ourselves witnessed any occurrence of the kind, but many persons, on whom we can place the most perfect reliance, have assured us that it is far from uncommon in this country.

The Chinese law prohibits the fabrication of rice-wine and spirits, on the ground that corn ought to be taken the greatest care of, in a country where all the labour and industry of the inhabitants is scarcely sufficient to supply the food required for the immense population. But these laws are pretty much like those that prohibit gaming — a perfect dead letter; a fee to the Mandarin removes all difficulties. The large establishments called *Chao-kouo* require a permission from the Government to distil brandy; and this is sold to them only on condition that they shall employ in their distilleries nothing but grain that is spoiled, and unfit for any other purpose. But that does not form the slightest hindrance to their using the very best grain the harvest produces.

Gambling and drunkenness, then, are the two permanent causes of pauperism in China; but there is a third, still more disastrous.

Chinese society has a certain tone of decency and reserve that may very well impose on those who look only at the surface, and judge merely by the momentary impression; but a very short residence among the Chinese is sufficient to show that their virtue is entirely external; their public morality is but a mask worn

over the corruption of their manners. We will take care not to lift the unclean veil that hides the putrefaction of this ancient Chinese civilisation; the leprosy of vice has spread so completely through this sceptical society, that the varnish of modesty with which it is covered is continually falling off and exposing the hideous wounds which are eating away the vitals of this unbelieving people. Their language is already revoltingly indecent, and the slang of the worst resorts of licentiousness threatens to become the ordinary language of conversation. There are some provinces in which the inns on the road have apartments entirely papered with representations of all kinds of shameless debauchery, and these abominable pictures are known among the Chinese by the pretty name of "flowers."

The ravages of pauperism, it may well be supposed, must be terrible, in a society in which gambling, drunkenness, and libertinism are thus largely developed; and, in fact, there do exist countless multitudes perpetually stagnating in vice and misery, and always ready to enrol themselves under the banners of theft and highway robbery. To this pauperism especially, we believe, is to be ascribed the monstrous crime of infanticide, so common in China, and for the prevention of which the charity of Europe, and particularly of France, has been so deeply interested. Of late years lively discussions have arisen upon this lamentable subject. On one hand, an attempt has been made to deny the fact—which is mere folly—and on the other, it has unquestionably been greatly exaggerated; as it mostly happens in cases of dispute, where so few people stop calmly at the point of truth. Many accounts sent from China have also served to embroil the controversy; and there has been,

in our opinion, far too much generalisation from the facts ascertained. It is worth while to try and find what is really true and what false, in this monstrous barbarity with which the Chinese nation is reproached. We will first quote some passages from a letter of Mons. Delaplace, who for seven years exercised his apostolic zeal in the missions of China.

“Some persons ask whether it is true that infanticide is of every-day occurrence in China. Although my voice may not go for much, I can add it to the crowd of others to assure you that thousands — millions—of infants perish in the waters of the rivers, or in the jaws of beasts. The letters of missionaries that I have read in the Annals generally assign as the cause of this barbarity the misconduct of parents, the trouble and burden of a numerous family, or simply caprice and custom. This is but too true, and I have witnessed the deplorable effects of these things both at Macao and in the other districts that I have visited during the past five years. But it seems to me that to all these causes must be added that of superstition, for it is that which occasions more frightful, more irretrievable ravages than all the rest. If the other missionaries do not speak of it, it may be that the evil is not so striking in their parts of the country as it is here; or that since the custom originates in superstition, they may merely comprise under this head whatever proceeds from it. However this may be, you may receive what I have told you as from an eye-witness; but remember that my observations apply only to the province of Ho-nan, where they were made. I cannot pretend to affirm anything concerning all China, where every province has a language, customs, and superstitions peculiar to itself.

“ The Chinese of whom I speak, that is to say, nearly all the pagans of Ho-nan, believe in the metempsychosis. According to their notions, every man has three *houen*. What is a *houen*? you will say; and the question is not easy to answer; for the idea attached to this word is very vague; but it may be said to signify mind, spirit, vitality. Every individual, then, has three *houen*, and at the death of their possessor one of them migrates into another body, the other remains in the family, that is the domestic *houen*; and the third reposes in the tomb. To this last papers are burnt, as a sort of sacrifice; to the domestic *houen*, which has its abode in the tablet, amongst the characters engraved upon it, sticks of perfume are burned, and funeral repasts offered. These honours paid, the family make themselves easy; the *houen* is appeased, and what is there to fear?

“ Such are the measures to be taken with respect to those who die at a mature age; but what is to be done for children? Custom does not permit the raising tablets to them, or rendering them any kind of worship, as their *houen* is not supposed to be perfect; but, although incomplete, it still exists; and in its imperfect state is still more to be dreaded than that of grown men; nothing can be done to pay it honour, and yet its anger is to be dreaded. They get out of this dilemma by a true Chinese method; that is to say, they endeavour to trick and deceive the *houen*. When a child is very ill, in fact, in its last agony, they contrive matters so that the *houen* as it leaves the body shall not know the family from which it has proceeded. They take the poor little dying creature and throw it in the water, or abandon it in some remote spot, or

bury it alive. Then the houen will be angry indeed ; but will take vengeance on the fish, or the beast of the field, and the family is saved. If the thing did not turn one sick with disgust and horror, one might laugh at the precautions taken to deceive the houen.

“ The person appointed to carry away the poor dying child does not proceed in a straight line, but zigzag, going a little one way, then turning back and walking in an opposite direction ; now east, and now west, describing a number of triangles, one upon another, in order that in this labyrinth of broken lines, the houen may not be able to find its way, in case it should be inclined to return to its former home.

“ Is not this pitiable, deplorable ? Such is actually the reason why so many children are cast upon the high-ways, and they are least unfortunate who are merely abandoned : their lives may be sometimes prolonged or even saved, but others are sometimes immolated in a more cruel manner.

“ In the month of June last, a pagan of the neighbourhood (about a mile from my house) seeing his child ill, dispatched it himself with his hatchet ; his idea being that the houen of this child would fasten upon another, and that all his children would die. It was necessary, therefore, to torment the houen, and in such a way that it should have no desire to lodge any more under his roof.

“ Others from a different motive, but one derived from the same strange superstition, exercise the same cruelties. The houen is regarded by them as a sort of evil spirit that desires to torture human creatures. A newborn infant, dying so young, has not afforded the houen sufficient means of slaking its thirst for barbarity.

They must, therefore, do what they can to satisfy it, as long as a breath remains in the little body. The houn, once satisfied, will cease to torment the family. Here, therefore, is another dying child to be hacked to pieces; and two rules are to be observed in the operation; first, it must be cut into three portions, the one composed of the head and breast, the second of the trunk and thighs, the third of the legs and feet; secondly, it must be the father or mother who shall thus mangle their own offspring. Do you believe these horrors? I am certain that many even among the missionaries have never heard them mentioned, and I repeat that it is very possible they may not be common all over China. It may even be that the kind of people with whom I have come in contact during the last three years, and the district of country I have traversed may be exceptional even in Ho-nan. But be assured that I am writing to you deplorable truths — truths so much the more deplorable, that we cannot, for the reasons above stated, even come near these poor little victims to bestow on them the gift of baptism. All is done in secret between the father and mother, who reserve for themselves this ferocious privilege.

“Since we are upon this subject, I will unveil to you another horror; I say unveil, for it is most probably new to you; you must have been in some such situation as I have found myself in, to become acquainted with it: —

“A man of a tolerably opulent family, a pagan of course, had for his two first children successively two daughters. He wished to know whether he should have a son. Can you guess what he did to find it out? He took a *tcha-dze*, a kind of cleaver used to chop up straw

for the food of animals, and having laid his little daughter on the ground, he placed her neck under the blade of the instrument, and pressed it down with all his strength, examining very attentively the while in what way the blood issued from the gash, for on that depended the presage. If it flowed gently along the cleaver, it was a proof that it had no virtue and energy left, and consequently he could only expect in future to have daughters. If, on the contrary, it spouted out, and especially if it touched the knees of the infant, then, indeed, vital strength was displayed in it, and he would be certain to obtain a boy. This custom was surely the invention of him who has been called ‘a murderer from the beginning.’ Oh pagans! true children of the demon, who delight in blood, even as he does, when will your hearts be moved by the charity of Jesus Christ?”

We have chosen this letter in preference to many others that we might have taken from the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* and of the “*Holy Infancy*,” because we were intimately acquainted with its author, and know that though his feelings are lively, he is a man of the most perfect prudence and discretion, and would assuredly never write down any facts without having inquired thoroughly into their authenticity. He is careful, we see, to observe, that the district where these atrocities took place may form an exception, not only to China in general, but even to the province of Ho-nan. He refrains from generalising upon what he has seen or heard, even from persons most worthy of credit. Unfortunately this wise caution is not always observed by those who speak of China; it is quite common for them to put down the act of a single individual to the

account of three hundred millions, and make the whole Chinese Empire responsible for what passes in a single district. This is one great cause of the numerous prejudices that exist in Europe on the subject of the Chinese.

In the part of the country alluded to by M. Delaplace some it seems hack their children to pieces to torment the houen, and prevent its wishing to return to them; others hack them up also, but with the view of sending the houen away content and pleased. We can hardly expect to find much logic in heads crazed with such superstitions; but it is still possible that these facts may be exceptional, and of very rare occurrence. We have ourselves during our many journeys and our long residence in China never heard of these horrid practices.

As for ordinary infanticides — the suffocation and drowning of infants — they are innumerable, more common, unquestionably, than in any other place in the world, and their principal cause is pauperism. From the information we have collected in various provinces, it appears that persons in embarrassed circumstances kill their new-born female children in the most pitiless manner. The birth of a male child in a family is an honour and a blessing; but the birth of a girl is regarded as a calamity especially with necessitous parents. A boy is soon able to work and help his parents, who count upon his support for their old age; the family is continued also by a boy, and a new link added to the genealogical chain. A girl, on the contrary, is a mere burden. According to Chinese manners, she must remain shut up till the period of her marriage, and she cannot exercise any kind of

industry, by which she might make amends to her parents for the expenses she occasions.. It is therefore the girls only that are murdered, as they are regarded as causes of indigence. In certain localities, where the culture of cotton, and the breeding of silkworms furnish young girls with suitable occupations, they are allowed to live, and the parents are even unwilling to see them marry and enter another family. Interest is the supreme motive of the Chinese, even in cases where the heart alone ought to have influence.

Must, then, the frequency of infanticide in China lead to the conclusion that the Chinese, as a nation, are barbarous, ferocious, regardless of the lives of those to whom they have given birth? We think not. There are, of course, degraded men to be found among them; men who shrink from no atrocity; and even of the Chinese in general, it may be said with truth, that they easily fall into vice, and commit crimes. But can we be surprised at this? Should we not, on the contrary, have cause for surprise if it were otherwise? What motive can be capable of arresting the force of passion in men without any religious belief, in whom self-interest is the only rule of good and evil, who live in a sceptical society, under atheistical laws, whose only sanction is the rod and the gallows. When we consider what takes place among Christian nations, we shall see that we have not quite so much room to cry out about pagans. If there is anything to be surprised at, it is that they have not made greater progress in evil. Christianity has ennobled human blood, and inspired an infinite respect for human life. Among Christians, religion, laws, national manners, all protect the lives of children as much

as those of grown persons, and nevertheless, infanticide, and wilful abortion, which is anticipated infanticide, are by no means unknown. Notwithstanding the severity of the laws, the vigilance of magistrates, and the precautions of every kind with which the lives of new-born infants are surrounded, crimes of this nature are continually engaging the attention of justice, and leaving room to imagine that those that remain unknown must attain a still more frightful amount. Need we wonder, then, that infanticides should be common in China, where the law gives the father such absolute power over the life of the child, and where there are not, as among us, numerous institutions of Christian charity, to collect these poor, forsaken, little ones, and tend them with pious solicitude. Let the Foundling Hospitals, the Houses of Refuge of various kinds, be suppressed, and it will soon be seen whether the most civilised, gentle, and charitable people of Europe, whose benevolence watches over the misfortunes and miseries of the whole world, would not present a spectacle not very different from that now seen in China. What we have just been relating of the Chinese has a strong resemblance to what, it appears, was passing in Paris in the time of St. Vincent de Paul.

“The city of Paris being of such an immense extent, and its inhabitants almost innumerable, there occur among them many disorders which it is not always possible to prevent; and among these one of the most pernicious is the exposure and abandonment of new-born infants, whose unnatural mothers, or other inhuman persons, not only place their lives, but also their souls, in peril, by not attempting to procure for

them the baptism that might bring them into a state of salvation.

“No year passes in which three or four hundred are not found exposed in the city and suburbs, and according to the orders of the police, it is the business of the commissioners of the Châtelet to pick up these forsaken children, and take notes of the place and the circumstances in which they are found. They used formerly to carry them to a house called *La Couche*, in the Rue St. Landry, where they were received by a certain widow, who lived there, with one or two servants, and undertook the charge of them; but not being able to attend to so great a number, or keep nurses to suckle them, or bring up those who were weaned, for want of sufficient funds, the greater part of these poor children perished; and sometimes the attendants, to escape the annoyance of their cries, gave them drugs to put them to sleep that killed them. Those who escaped this danger were given to anybody that came to ask for them, and sold for the smallest sums, even for as little as twenty *sous*. They were brought in this way sometimes to make them suck diseased women, whose corrupt milk soon killed them; or to introduce as supposititious children into families, or with various bad intentions. There are cases, horrible to relate, in which they have been bought in order to make use of them in magical and diabolical operations; so that it seems these poor innocents were all condemned to death, or something worse. There was not one that escaped misfortune, for there was no one who took the least care for their preservation; and what is still more deplorable, many died without baptism; this widow having de-

clared that she had never caused any one of them to be baptized."

"This disorder, so strange in a city so wealthy, so well provided with police, so Christian as Paris, touched the heart of M. Vincent, when it became known to him; but not seeing very well what was to be done, he spoke to some of the ladies of Charity, and begged them to go to the house, not to discover the evil, for it was already well known, but to see whether it was not possible to provide a remedy for it."*

This, then, is the way in which, in the time of St. Vincent de Paul, infants were treated in this wealthy, Christian, and well ordered city of Paris. Need we, then, be surprised to hear of infanticides among the miserably destitute lower classes of China?

In the accounts of missionaries, it has frequently been stated, that it is common in China to see the bodies of infants floating on the waters of the lakes and rivers, or lying on the road, and becoming the prey of unclean animals. We are convinced of the perfect correctness of these accounts; but it must not be supposed that the custom is quite so general that you cannot take a walk without seeing the body of some infant in the jaws of dogs or hogs. That would be a great mistake, and we feel it as a duty to declare, that during more than ten years that we were in the habit of travelling about China in all directions by land and water, we never saw the body of a single forsaken infant, and we certainly did not go along with our eyes shut. We repeat, nevertheless, that we are quite certain the fact does occur, and we should even be surprised if it did not, for this reason among others.

* Life of St. Vincent de Paul, by Louis Abelly, vol. i. p. 143.

There are in China no places set apart for cemeteries, as there are in Europe; every family interrs its own dead on its own ground, and burials are consequently very expensive, and persons not in good circumstances are often much embarrassed for the means of rendering the accustomed funeral honours to their relatives. When the deceased is a father or a mother, all imaginable sacrifices must be made to obtain a coffin and a suitable funeral. But with respect to dead children there is not the same anxiety, and parents already poor will not reduce themselves to mendicity for the sake of burying them. They content themselves therefore with wrapping the body in a piece of matting, and placing it in the current of a river, in the ravine of some solitary mountains, or even occasionally with leaving it on the roadside, and it is then far from impossible that it may become the prey of beasts, but it would be wrong to conclude, when a body is seen under such circumstances, that it had always been left exposed while living, though that may happen sometimes, especially in the case of female infants of whom the parents wish to rid themselves, but may sometimes hope perhaps that others will take them.

In the great cities you see near the ramparts crypts intended to receive the dead bodies of infants whom the parents have no means of burying. They are thrown into these wells, and from time to time quick-lime is thrown in also to consume them. There have been instances of unnatural parents throwing girls alive into these pits, but it is gross exaggeration to say that they are filled with living infants whose cries are heard afar off. When the imagination is powerfully excited, people hear many things not to be heard by any one else.

At Peking, every day just before morning dawns, five carts, each drawn by an ox, traverse the five districts of the town; namely, the north, south, east, west, and centre. A signal is made of the passage of the cart, and those who have children dead or living that they wish to put away, bring them out, and give them to the driver. The dead are thrown into the above mentioned pit, the living carried to an asylum named *Yu-ying-tang*, or "Temple of the new-born," where nurses are provided at the expense of the State. These hospitals for forsaken children exist in all towns of any importance.

Many people in Europe are perfectly persuaded of the whole Chinese nation being so brutal and barbarous, that the crime of infanticide is tolerated among them by government and public opinion. This is not the case. The murder of infants is regarded as a crime in China, and the magistrates have never ceased to raise their voices against this horrible abuse of paternal authority. Of this the following Edict placarded in Canton towards the end of 1848 may serve as one proof.

"EDICT AGAINST INFANTICIDE.

"The Criminal Judge of the province of Kouang-tong strictly forbids the abandonment of female infants, and orders that people shall cease this detestable custom, and fulfil the duties of life. I have learned that in Canton and its environs the abominable practice prevails of exposing female infants, in some cases because the family is poor, and cannot maintain a numerous offspring; in others because the parents desire a son, and fear that the care to be bestowed by the mother when a girl is born, may tend to retard

another birth. Although there exist many establishments to receive foundlings of the feminine sex, this revolting practice still prevails — a practice which is an outrage to morals and civilisation, and which breaks the harmony of heaven.

“ I therefore severely prohibit it, and urge the following considerations.

“ Consider the insects, fish, birds, and wild beasts ; all love their little ones. How then can you massacre those who are formed of your own blood, and who are to you as the hairs of your head ?

“ Do not make yourself uneasy on account of your poverty, for you can by the labour of your hands procure for yourselves some resource ; and though it may be difficult for you to marry your daughters, that is no reason for abandoning them. The two powers of heaven and earth forbid it. Children of both sexes belong to the order of heaven ; and if a girl is born to you, you ought to bring her up, even though she may not be worth as much as a boy. If you kill her, how can you hope to have sons ? Will you not have to fear the consequences of your unworthy conduct, and especially the decrees of the justice of heaven ? You stifle your paternal love, but you will repent of this when it is too late.

“ I am a judge full of benevolence, goodness, and commiseration. You are all, if you have daughters, to bring them up with care ; or if you are too poor for this, send them to the foundling hospitals, or give them to some friend who may bring them up for you. If you abandon them, you shall, as soon as you are found out, be punished according to the laws, for you are unnatural parents ; and for the crime of the murder of your

children you are unworthy of any indulgence. Discontinue, then, this custom of devoting your children to death; cease to commit this bad action, and to draw on yourselves reproof and calamity.

“ Let every one obey this special edict.”

We might quote a great number of proclamations of the first Mandarins of the Empire, which speak in reprobation of the conduct of parents unnatural enough to put their girls to death, and which threaten them with all the rigours of the law.

These proclamations certainly themselves show how frequent infanticides must be in China, but at the same time they afford a proof that Government and public opinion do not favour such crimes. The foundling hospitals alluded to also testify to a certain amount of solicitude in the Chinese administration towards these unfortunate little creatures. We know very well, nevertheless, that these establishments afford a very poor resource, and can by no means remedy so extensive an evil; the Mandarins and officers of the hospital are far too busy in making as much money as they can out of it, to attend much to the treatment of the children.

A good government might certainly do much for the welfare of these establishments, which have existed in China for ages, and of which the pagan nations of the West never had even the idea. It is said that in Lacedemon, according to the laws of the sage Lycurgus, every child, at its birth, was examined with care, and if it appeared ill-formed, thrown into an abyss at the foot of Taygetus. The Romans, who fattened the fish in their ponds by throwing their slaves to them, had assuredly no very tender and compassionate feelings

towards small children. Even the Chinese have not yet reached that point. Their government at least protests constantly against every attempt on human life, and if it is powerless to oppose a sufficient barrier to this progressive evil, it is because, to withdraw men from vice and lead them to virtue, something more is required than worldly motives, and philosophical considerations. In every province of China the government has expressed some interest in the fate of forsaken children; and if these works of beneficence, however excellent and praiseworthy in themselves, appear struck with sterility, it is because the religious idea, the vital spark of faith, is wanting to vivify them and render them fruitful.

The Society of Holy Infancy, founded at Paris only a few years ago, by the zeal and charity of M. de Forbin Janson, has already perhaps saved in China a greater number of children, than the immense revenues of all the hospitals of this vast Empire. It is beautiful, it is glorious for Catholic France, thus to watch with generous solicitude over the children of foreign nations, even of those who reject with disdain the benefits of her inexhaustible charity. Happy is the childhood of Catholic Europe, in whom religion has thus inspired in their earliest years the heroic sentiments of beneficence and self-sacrifice. Society may count upon a generation, thus warmly interested in the salvation of infants abandoned at the other extremity of the world, and whose touching and marvellous works are making their influence felt in the most distant countries. Strange indeed is it, that this Society of Holy Infancy should be now struggling with more success against the practice of infanticide, than the Emperor of China, with all his treasures and his legions of Mandarins.

CHAP. X.

UNCULTIVATED TRACTS IN THE PROVINCE OF KIANG-SI.—THE GUARDHOUSE.—THE VINEGAR POLYPUS.—THE MANDARIN AND HIS STEED.—THEFT OF WATER-MELONS.—ARRIVAL AT NAN-TCHANG-FOU.—MODE OF INSTALLING ONESELF IN THE PALACE OF LITERARY COMPOSITION.—SOLEMN PUBLIC DINNER.—DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE SPECTATORS.—VISIT OF THE PREFECT OF THE TOWN.—A MONGOL MANDARIN.—HIS GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE.—LABOURS OF THE PROTESTANT METHODISTS IN CHINA.—CHINESE ASTRO-NOMERS.—ASPECT OF THE CAPITAL OF KIANG-SI.—MANUFACTURE OF PORCELAIN.—CHINESE ANTIQUARIES.—ORIGIN OF THE GOD OF PORCELAIN.—PISCICULTURE IN KIANG-SI.—NEW TRAVELLING ARRANGEMENTS.

FROM the Lake Pou-yang to *Nan-tchang-fou*, the capital of the province of Kiang-si, the country that we travelled through for two days was a mere desert, in which were seen here and there a few wretched huts built of reeds, and some patches of ground half cultivated by poor peasants. Considered in relation to comfort and civilization, nothing could well be more gloomy and desolate than its appearance; as far as our eyes could reach we saw nothing but vast prairies scantily covered with dry yellowish grass, that crumbled to dust beneath our feet; the dilapidated sheds, to which from habit the name of inn is given, offer no refreshment to travellers, but red rice boiled in water, and salt vegetables. We did not find even tea, and those who had forgotten to bring a little store with them had to drink hot water. This

country, therefore, as may be supposed, was not precisely calculated for a journey of pleasure ; and yet our two days' march across this wild and desert tract was a real refreshment to us, a source of that vague sweet melancholy feeling that is often so soothing to the heart. It seemed to us as if we were once more wandering amidst the wild solitudes of Mongolia. The manners of those nomadic tribes, their tents, their flocks and herds ; the long caravans of camels, the tall grass of the desert, the grunting ox of Thibet, the yellow sheep, the Buddhist monasteries with their numerous Lamas, all these recollections gradually grouped themselves together, and furnished to our imaginations most charming and varied pictures. We had been so long whirled about in the restless crowds of the civilised Chinese, that our minds had need of this calmness and repose. The tumult and agitation of so many great towns had at last almost thrown us into a fever, and for some days the peaceful silence of the desert was delightful.

Before arriving at Nan-tchang-fou, we stopped at a sort of guard-house, to allow the hottest time of the day to pass, and we were very graciously received by a Mandarin with a white ball, who had about fifteen soldiers under his command. The refreshments that he offered us were indeed in that weather not very tempting, tea, rice-wine, roasted pistachio nuts, preserved ginger, and pickled chives ; all these things did not seem likely to quench our intense and burning thirst ; and we gazed mournfully at these Chinese dainties, without daring to touch them. The Weeping Willow, indeed, drank hot wine and boiling tea, munched the chives and the ginger, smoked one after another five or six pipes of tobacco, and found himself afterwards perfectly refreshed. Our

tongues and throats really seemed to dry up more and more as we looked at him.

We inquired of the White Ball, whether it would not be possible to procure anywhere a little cold water? "Yes," replied he, "a few yards from here there is a very deep well, and the water is excellent, but as cold as ice; you must warm it a little before drinking it, otherwise it will certainly give you the colic." We begged him to send for some, promising to take every precaution against any illness it might occasion; and a good-natured soldier took a large pail, and ran to draw us some of this dangerous water. We then asked whether perhaps there was any vinegar in the establishment. "I have some," he said; "but I am afraid you will not like it; it is polypus vinegar, made by the animal itself." "Polypus vinegar; oh! we are acquainted with that; it is the best vinegar that can be got. But how does it happen that you possess such a treasure as a *tsou-no-dze* (vinegar polypus)? Were you ever on the coast of Leao-tong?" "Yes; some years ago I was sent on an expedition into that country, and I brought back a *tsou-no-dze* with me."

During this conversation the soldier arrived with the pail of ice-cold water; the White Ball gave us some of his wonderful vinegar, and with the help of a little brown sugar we compounded an exquisite beverage. The Chinese gazed at us with astonishment as we drank it. How it happened that these numerous and abundant libations, instead of occasioning colic, only cheered and refreshed us, they could not understand; and they could only get over the difficulty by declaring that the people of the West had a totally different organisation from that of the Central Nation.

This tsou-no-dze is a creature that, on account of its extraordinary property of making excellent vinegar, merits particular mention. It is a monstrous assemblage of fleshy and glutinous membranes, tubes, and shapeless appendages that give it a very ugly and repulsive appearance; you would take it for an inert dead mass; but when touched, it contracts and dilates and assumes various forms. It is an animal whose structure and character are not better known than that of the other polypi. This tsou-no-dze is found in the Yellow Sea, and the Chinese fish for it on the coasts of Leaotong, but it is rather scarce. Possibly it may be more abundant in some other places, where it is neglected from ignorance of its peculiar property.

This polyp is placed in a large vessel filled with fresh water, to which a few glasses of spirits are added; any after twenty or thirty days this liquid is found transformed into excellent vinegar, without going through any other process, and without the addition of the smallest ingredient. The vinegar is as clear as spring water, very strong, and of a very agreeable taste. After the first transformation the source appears inexhaustible; for as it is drawn off by degrees for consumption, it is only necessary to add an equal quantity of pure water, without any more spirit, and the vinegar remains equally good.

The tsou-no-dze, like the other polypi, is easily propagated by germination; you detach a limb which vegetates and grows, and in a short time is found to possess the same property of changing water into vinegar. These details are not only based on the best information we have been able to collect, but we ourselves possessed one of these polypi, and kept it for a year, using constantly the delicious vinegar it distilled

for us. At our departure for Thibet, we presented it to the Christians of our mission in the Valley of Black Waters.

After having abundantly quenched our thirst with the lemonade thus obtained, we bade adieu to the gracious White Ball of the guard-house. "Since you have honoured my poor dwelling," said he, "I will ask the favour of accompanying you as far as the river which passes by Nan-tchang-fou." "We cannot permit such an expenditure of kindness on your part." "The Rites require it." "Ah! you are not a man of Kiang-si, since you are willing to extend the demands of the Rites instead of limiting them!"

"No! I am originally from the poor and humble province of Sse-tchouen."

"Sse-tchouen! We have traversed that province, and in our opinion it is the finest, richest province of the Empire. A man of Sse-tchouen cannot find himself very pleasantly situated in Kiang-si, especially in such a desert as this district."

"Kiang-si offers indeed few resources. Everything is dearer than in the other provinces, and in fact it is the practice of Government only to send here Mandarins whom it wishes to punish. Everyone knows that."

This little piece of confidence gave us the right to conclude that our dear White Ball himself had been in a manner put in the corner when he was sent to Kiang-si.

"We must hope," said we, "that you will not remain long here, and that the Emperor will give you in a better country a post more appropriate to your virtues and merits."

"I was not born under a happy influence. Success

appears to fly from me ; but perhaps your good words will bring me better fortune."

Whilst we were thus talking with mutual compliments, a soldier was saddling a lean horse that was kept tied to a stake a few yards from the guard-house, though such a precaution appeared quite unnecessary, as there was not much danger of his running away. As soon as he was saddled, they dragged him towards the Mandarin of the White Ball, who jumped upon his back pretty nimbly.

The poor animal staggered under the load, although the cavalier was not of excessive dimensions ; and we could not make out how he was to accompany us, if he were mounted in that fashion.

"Come," he cried, "let us set off;" and at the same time he hit his courser a thump on the head with the handle of his whip. The animal shook his ears, sneezed, executed a few heavy gambols, and then returned to his former state of majestic immobility. "Come," cried the ardent cavalier again, "are you not going to get into your palanquins? Do let us set off." "Directly," said we ; "do you try to go on before us, for it is easy to see that your quadruped will hardly be able to keep up with our bearers."

"Yes," said the White Ball, "that's it, I will go first;" and again he bestowed a vigorous cuff on the head of the steed, who made two or three jumps forward, and then stumbled and fell on his knees as if to entreat his rider to leave him to his repose. The military Mandarin glided softly along his neck, and stretching out his arms, measured his length in the middle of the road. While the rider was employed in picking himself up again, the horse returned with the most perfect composure to his beloved

stake, which he contemplated in the most affectionate manner. The Mandarin was not at all discouraged, but merely observed, "the stupid beast stumbled, we will try again;" and as he spoke he contrived once more to seat himself on his high-mettled racer, which two of the soldiers had dragged forward again, while a third was belabouring him behind with a broomstick. At last they succeeded in getting him into motion, and then we entered our palanquins and followed; but he remained all the way so far behind that no one would have dreamed that he was supposed to form part of our company.

There are very few horses in the south of China, as private people do not make use of them either for travelling or for rural labour. At certain distances on the principal roads you meet with relays, established for the service of Government; and these horses come from Tartary, and are in general of a pretty good breed, but they cannot well endure the heat of the southern countries; in a few years they lose their strength, and become at last completely unserviceable.

After two hours' march we arrived on the banks of a great river named *Tchang*. On the opposite bank was the town of Nan-tchang-fou, the capital of the province of Kiang-si. A large ferry-boat lay ready to carry us across, and our whole caravan entered it, with the exception of our supposed companion, the Mandarin of the White Ball, who was behind, nobody knew how far.

At the moment when the boat was about to start, two of our bearers begged the master to wait a moment, and leaped ashore again. They then immediately ran to a field of water-melons, stole as many as they could carry, and, jumping quickly on board again, were soon out of reach. The owner witnessed the theft from his

house, that stood but a little way off, and ran after them, but to no purpose, as he was too late. Whilst he was vociferating and gesticulating on the shore, the marauders had divided the water-melons among them and were refreshing themselves quite at their ease, without troubling themselves at all about the unfortunate proprietor, who cursed them with all the strength of his lungs.

When we had crossed the river Tchang, we found some public functionaries waiting for us on a broad quay that ran the whole length of the suburb. They entered into conference with the Weeping Willow, while we remained seated in our palanquins, and the crowd circulated about us, apparently without suspecting that they were exotic personages who had just landed in the capital of Kiang-si. The deliberations of our men of business were so immoderately prolonged, that at last we got out of our boxes, to go and inquire what they were talking about, and why they kept us so long waiting in the street. The Mandarins of the place had not yet, it appeared, made up their minds as to where we were to lodge, and they were consequently endeavouring to get some advice from the Willow, who certainly would not be able to relieve them from their perplexity. The passers-by immediately noticed the strangeness of our costume, and the magic yellow caps and red girdles did not fail to produce their effect. An immense crowd had soon collected round us. "See!" said we to the official personage of Nan-tchang-fou, "the lower classes of the people are already assembling from all corners upon the quay; is it proper that we should not yet know where we are to lodge?"

The Mandarins, already bewildered by the concourse of people, did not know what to do, but our servant

Wei-chan came up and pointed out to us a large stately building. "That," he said, "was a Wen-tchang-koun, or Palace of Literary Composition." We had, it will be remembered, already lodged once during our journey at one of these establishments, and we had a very agreeable recollection of it. We did not deliberate much longer therefore, but resolved to go and instal ourselves there. To succeed in our attempt nothing more was required than a little steadiness, and we returned accordingly to our palanquins, and called out to the bearers in the most imperious tone we could command, "to the Wen-tchang-koun!"

"To the Wen-tchang-koun?" they repeated; "we obey;" and immediately they took up the palanquins; and Wei-chan, who perfectly understood these sudden evolutions, put himself at the head of the convoy, shouting to the crowd to make way with all due respect. The waves of the multitude divided as if by enchantment; the Weeping Willow and the Mandarins of the town, who had not yet made up their minds, followed us by a kind of instinct; all the other members of the caravan did the same; and we entered thus the Palace of Literary Composition with that "haughty majesty" which is so much to the taste of the Chinese.

The guardians of the establishment, seeing a procession arrive, escorted by an immense crowd, of course supposed the new comers were persons of distinction. The folding doors were all thrown wide open to admit us, and after having traversed several halls and corridors, we stopped at the most remote, by the contrivance of Wei-chan, who conducted the enterprise with marvellous audacity. We then issued from our palanquins, and desired to see the chief guardian of the Wen-tchang-koun. "Open the

superior apartments directly," said we, "and prepare the evening meal. We shall remain here some days. Let every one do his duty, and then all will be content."

We then addressed the functionaries of the town, who had come to receive us at the quay, but who had no idea what to do with us. "Do you," said we, "go to the Prefect of the city, tell him that we are in the enjoyment of good health, and that we have installed ourselves at the Wen-tchang-koun, in a manner conformable to our tastes." We concluded with a profound bow to the variously coloured balls, who departed looking extremely mystified, and as if they were made to play a part that they did not in the least understand.

When every one else was gone, the Weeping Willow remained planted before us without saying a word, his little tearful eyes twinkling curiously, and seeming about to ask what we were going to do with him. "Master Lieou," said we, "you had to conduct us to the capital of Kiang-si; we are arrived at that capital, and your mission therefore is finished; where are you going to lodge?"

"Where am I going to lodge?" he repeated, with an air of open-mouthed astonishment. "How do I know?"

"You have certainly a better right to know than anybody else."

"That is possible, but nevertheless I do know nothing about it."

"Go and look for the head keeper of the establishment; he will put you somewhere. To-morrow we shall most likely have a visit from some of the authorities, and you can settle your affairs with them."

The Willow thought there was some sense in what we said, and went in search of the keeper accordingly,

while we ascended the stairs to take a view of the lodging that we had thus appropriated.

Wei-chan, with the assistance of some of the servants of the house, had already put everything in order in the cool and spacious apartments which overlooked the town as well as the course of the river that we had just crossed, and the surrounding country.

An open gallery, provided with large porcelain seats, and vases of flowers, looked on the quay, where the crowd had assembled around us while the Willow and the Mandarins carried on their debate. We took a few turns backwards and forwards in this charming gallery; the sun had just set, and the delicious freshness of the evening was beginning to make itself felt. Some of the Chinese, who were still stationed on the quay, perceived us; the news flew round with the speed of lightning, and soon all heads were held as high in the air as possible, and all eyes were directed towards the gallery of the Wen-tchang-koun. Every one that passed stopped to contemplate us at leisure, and by degrees the crowd became so dense, that there was no possibility of passing at all. As we had so elevated a position, at so great a distance from the multitude, we could not be inconvenienced by their looks, eager as they were; and we therefore quietly continued our promenade, happy to be able to satisfy, without inconvenience, the very legitimate curiosity of the inhabitants of Nan-tchang-fou. We were only deprived of the advantage of hearing the conversation, in which there doubtless occurred many curious and interesting reflections.

The Maître d'Hotel of the Wen-tchang-koun now came to inform us that the supper was ready, and to ask where we would please to have it served.

We looked at one another, the same thought occurring to both, and inquired whether there would be any inconvenience in our taking it on this gallery.

“None at all,” he replied; “on the contrary, it will be lighter and cooler here, and besides, the *Hundred families* * collected down there will be able to see you.” As we asked nothing better than to be agreeable to the “hundred families,” especially when they kept at a respectful distance, it was resolved that we should sup in the open air.

A brilliantly varnished table was brought and placed in the middle of the gallery; and, when the crowd observed the attendants placing on it numerous little dishes of dainties, by which Chinese repasts are usually commenced, a loud murmur arose all along the quay, and they evidently anticipated great amusement from seeing in what fashion the Western Devils consumed their food. They expected to see something extremely curious. Men from beyond the seas, and with such singular physiognomies, must certainly eat and drink in a manner quite unknown to the people of the Central Nation. Our prayer before the meal, and especially the two signs of the cross, drawn on a large scale, promised them from the commencement something interesting. Amidst these innumerable spectators there must have been some who understood the meaning of this sign, for there are Christians at Nan-tehang-fou, but the majority must have considered this a very odd way to begin supper. They expected, therefore, to get a glimpse into European manners.

Wei-chan brought us the rice-wine smoking hot in a

* “Hundred families” is a Chinese phrase, meaning the people.

pewter urn, and poured out some little porcelain cups of it, which we drank in the most scrupulous conformity to the Rites. We then began to pick some melon-seeds, exactly as if we had been born on the borders of the Yellow River, instead of the Garonne. The spectators, somewhat astonished, began to take less interest in our manœuvres — all this was familiar to them. We passed some time in drinking these little cups of rice-wine, and crunching the melon-seeds ; not that we were in the habit of doing so, we generally directed our attention to what was more substantial ; but this time, either from vanity, and the desire to display our knowledge of their customs, or out of mischief, to disappoint the curious gazers, we resolved to eat and drink in the most rigorously orthodox Chinese fashion.

The disenchantment of the worthy inhabitants of Nan-tchang-fou was complete when they saw us adjust our ivory chop-sticks between our fingers with perfect ease and gravity, and, seizing little morsels here and there, carry them dexterously to our mouths, and go through our exercise with these instruments as if we had done nothing else all our lives, — there was a movement among the crowd as much as to say, "We have been prettily taken in ; those men are not nearly such barbarians as we thought ; they might almost belong to the Flowery Kingdom."

As the exhibition thus by no means realised all that it had promised, the disappointed crowd after a time began to disperse, and soon there remained no one on the quay but some dealers in fruit and provisions, and a few idle people, who smoked their pipes, casting glances from time to time, with an observant eye, upon the two French missionaries, who, stimulated by excel-

lent appetites, were dexterously disposing of the minute dainties served up to them.

As we were about to rise from table, we beheld a procession of Mandarins draw up before the gate of the palace. In a few minutes an officer of the establishment appeared upon the balcony, and presented us with a sheet of red paper, on which was inscribed the name of the Prefect of the district. "Invite him to enter," we said; and the magistrate immediately presented himself, accompanied by the functionaries of his tribunal. After the usual salutations and compliments, the Prefect, whose face showed him to be of Mantchou-Tartar descent, requested to know why we had established ourselves at the Wen-tchang-koun.

"Because, when we landed on this side of the river, our escort were unable to tell where we should go," was our reply; "we therefore chose the Wen-tchang-koun."

"These people were very stupid! Your lodging was prepared in the centre of the town."

"We are obliged for your attention, but we do not think the lodging in the interior of the town can be so agreeable as this. We Europeans like fresh air, and this balcony suits us admirably."

"No doubt the situation is most agreeable in the heat of summer; but this building is not quite at the disposal of the municipal authorities; it is the property of the Literary Corporation."

"We know it; and we also know that the Literary Corporation delights in the exercise of those social virtues which are inculcated in the sacred and classic writings. The *literati* and Bachelors of Arts in all civilised countries are scrupulously observant of the rites of hospitality toward strangers. If you should

ever deign to visit the humble empire of France, the learned men of the country would not fail to lodge you in every Wen-tchang-koun on your route."

"Ah! I am unworthy! I am unworthy!" cried the Prefect, with a shower of quick little bows. "Nevertheless," he continued, resuming a vertical position, "I came to invite you to leave this palace, and repair to the lodging I have prepared in the interior of the town."

"Ah! we are unworthy so much attention!" replied we, executing in our turn a great many bows. "You see how comfortable we are; reason invites us to remain, and the Rites, which are founded on reason, enjoin you to leave us in peace."

"Well said! very well said!" cried the Mandarin, laughing. "I see that it will be difficult to persuade you to leave the Wen-tchang-koun."

"Very difficult—almost impossible; you had better not think of it any more; let us talk of something else."

The advice was taken, and the conversation turned to less embarrassing topics. We spoke of our travels, of China, of the countries of the West,—in short, a little of everything. The Prefect was most agreeable, and said not another word about turning us out, which complaisance we rewarded by the polite attention of accompanying him to the gate of the "Palace of Literary Composition."

Our position was thus triumphantly established at Nan-tchang-fou, and all that remained for us to do was to arrange the rest of our journey to Canton. The next day and the following day we passed in the capital of Kiang-si, and we were visited by many Mandarins, and

by the chiefs of the learned body whose palace we occupied. Every one was very obliging, nor did they find fault with our manner of installing ourselves in the Wenchang-koun. They contented themselves with laughing good-naturedly at the neatness and decision with which we had got out of our difficulties, and the cool manner in which we had established ourselves to our liking.

Among the numerous visitors we received at Nanchang-fou, there was one who interested us by his rough, almost savage behaviour, which was without a tinge of the supple, insincere courtesy that characterises the Chinese.

We were one day reclining on porcelain seats in our balcony, breathing the fresh air from the river, and watching the passers-by on the quay below, when a young Mandarin entered abruptly, without being announced, bade us good day with a proud and independent bow, to which we were unaccustomed in China, and, pushing forward a bamboo seat with his foot, sat down opposite us. We were at first inclined to recall him forcibly to the observance of the Rites, and to soften a little the bluntness of his behaviour. But his countenance pleased us; it was lively, intelligent, full of candour and integrity, and we thought that his conduct might denote a haughty character, but not necessarily an impudent one.

"You treat us like old friends," we said; "between friends etiquette is superfluous."

"The Chinese are very ceremonious," replied he; "but I am not a Chinese, I am a Mongol."

"A Mongol! Ah! we ought to have guessed it. We ourselves have spent a good deal of time in the Land of Grass; we are acquainted with the Eight Ban-

ners, and have pitched our tent in all the pastures of Tartary, from the great Kouren, near the Kalkhas, to the Koukou-noor on the shores of the Blue Sea."

At the sound of these names, so poetical and sweet to the ears of a Tartar of the Steppes, the young Mongol rose in a transport of delight, seizing our hands, and patting us on the shoulder, to testify his friendship.

"What," he exclaimed, "you know the great Kouren and the Koukou-noor? You have encamped in the Land of Grass? No doubt you can speak the Mongol language."

"Yes, brother," we replied, "we understand the tongue of Tchinggis and Timour."

From that moment Chinese was set aside, and the conversation carried on in Mongol. This young man belonged to one of the noblest families of the tribe of Gchekten, with which we had resided for two years. Probably we had met him more than once during our journeys in the desert. He told us, that having gone to Peking in the suite of his sovereign, when the tributary princes paid their annual visit to the Emperor at the commencement of the year, he had been seized with a desire to stay in the capital. His aim was to learn Chinese, study its literature, and, having passed the necessary examinations, to enter the magistracy.

After several years' study, he had obtained the degree of bachelor, and a few months before meeting us had been sent as supernumerary Mandarin to a tribunal of the capital of Kiang-si.

Perhaps our old predilection for the Mongols influenced us,^a but we thought there was something superior to the Chinese character in this child of the desert.

The civilisation of Peking, engrafted on this strong, vigorous disposition, appeared to have produced a new type, uniting and blending with advantage Chinese intelligence and penetration with the rough frankness and energy of the Mongol Tartars.

During the time we spent at Nan-tchang-fou we saw this young Mandarin several times, and his society was always welcome. His conversation recalled most agreeably the long time we had spent in the deserts of Tartary. He was also intelligent and well informed, and quite free from that affected disdain for foreign countries, and especially for the men and things of Europe, which the Chinese love to exhibit. On the contrary, he listened attentively, and with sincere admiration, to all that we told him of the nations of the West. He even went so far as to ask us whether in coming from France to China we had followed the route round Cape Horn, the Cape of Good Hope, or through the Red Sea. "Sea voyages must be very comfortable when you are used to them," said he, "but for my part, if I wanted to reach your country, I would rather travel with a caravan, in the Mongol fashion. I should start from Peking, and cross the desert to Kiaktha, on the frontiers of Siberia. Thence I should traverse the kingdom of the Oros (Russians), and the various Western States, until I reached the grand Empire of France."

"And if you wished to visit the In-ki-li?" (English).

"Oh, I know that the country of the Red-haired people is surrounded by water on all sides. They are islanders. If I wished to visit them, I should sell my camels and hire a fire-junk" (steamboat).

We did not inform him of the improbability of finding purchasers for camels in Paris, lest it should lower that city in his estimation.

Of late years there is a remarkable tendency among the educated Chinese to the study of geography and of foreign nations, and this appears to us an immense step towards the development amongst them of the taste for European science. Since the war with the English, there have appeared several very complete Chinese geographies, containing very correct information concerning the various parts of the world, and especially the kingdoms of Europe. It is evident that a European hand has been engaged in their composition, and from the flattering strain with which the United States are mentioned in them, it is strongly to be suspected that an American has had something to do with these publications.

The Methodist ministers, who lie in ambush in all the five ports open to Europeans, having remarked that the prodigious quantity of Bibles furtively scattered along the shores of the Empire have not proved remarkably efficacious in working the conversion of the Chinese, have at last given up this harmless and useless system of Propagandism. They seem convinced now that bales even of well-bound and cautiously distributed Bibles, will not make much impression on the Chinese nation, and they have lost some of their faith in the miraculous effect of this measure. However, their vocation being to print books and disperse them, they have composed certain little scientific works, by which they hope to captivate the minds of the Chinese.

In 1851, a few days before our departure from China,

we chanced to get sight of one of these productions. It was simply a technical treatise on the Electric Telegraph.

Truly, a man must be profoundly ignorant of the Chinese nation to offer such a book for its instruction. The theory of the Electric Telegraph for men whose language does not even contain terms to express the simplest phenomena of electricity! It is scarcely credible. We feel assured, that throughout the Celestial nation there is not one man capable of understanding this work; for, in order to express new ideas, the author has had recourse to new combinations of characters, forming a very original jargon, which the Chinese will not be in a hurry to construe. Doubtless everybody must wish for the moment when the Chinese shall abandon their ancient prejudices, and cultivate the modern sciences; but all instruction ought to proceed methodically, which Methodists at least should understand. Would there be a single Christian in China if the Catholic missionaries, instead of teaching the catechism to their neophytes, had begun by placing in their hands a treatise on grace, with dissertations on the Jansenist heresy?

This proceeding has been adopted partly in consequence of a false idea of the Chinese which has been conceived in Europe. Because they are said to know how to calculate eclipses, and so held in high favour some Jesuit astronomers who visited the court in the first reigns of the Mantchou dynasty, it has been supposed that the nation was devoted to astronomic science, and consisted of three hundred millions of Aragos, more or less busied with stars and planets. And yet if there is on the earth a nation absorbed by

the affairs of this world, and who trouble themselves little about what passes among the heavenly bodies, it is assuredly the Chinese. The most erudite among them just know of the existence of astronomy, or, as they call it, *tien-wen* — “celestial literature.” But they are ignorant of the simplest principles of the science, and those who regard an eclipse as a natural phenomenon, instead of a dragon who is seeking to devour the sun and moon, are enlightened indeed. If foreign astronomers formerly exercised so much power at the court, and enjoyed such fame, is it not a proof that the native professors of the science were incompetent? Until the Jesuits came to their assistance, they were unable to draw up a good almanac, and since their expulsion from Peking, the members of the Tribunal of Mathematics have relapsed into their former ignorance, and every year government is obliged to send the almanac to Canton, to be corrected by Europeans. The Chinese, we are convinced, would have great aptitude for all the sciences. From their quick penetration and incomparable patience, they would make rapid progress; but hitherto they have studied nothing for its own sake, they look only on the practical and productive side of things. Physiology, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics. are considered only in their bearing upon sa-pecks. In their hands everything becomes a trade. If the books on astronomy and electricity, that the Methodists compose for them, furnished recipes for amassing a large fortune in a short time, they would soon conquer their repugnance to study them. They would listen very attentively to any one who should teach them how to augment their incomes, but would laugh in derision at a proposal merely to increase their

knowledge: they would consider such an offer merely as a bad joke.

We took advantage of our leisure time to view Nan-tchang-fou, which is one of the most celebrated of the provincial towns. We had already passed through it in 1840, but secretly, and in too great a hurry to have a very correct idea of it. Like other Chinese towns, it contains no public monuments worthy of attention. Pagodas, tribunals, and a few triumphal arches, erected in honour of widows and virgins, form its most striking architectural works. The streets are large and tolerably clean, the warehouses and shops magnificently adorned and laid out. On the whole, the town is the most regular and handsome, next to Tching-tou-fou, the capital of Sse-tchouen, that we saw throughout the Empire. Although Kiang-si is a poor province, incapable of self-support, the commerce of Nan-tchang-fou is considerable. This results from its position on the line of communication between the great centres of population and activity, such as Nan-kin, Canton, Hankou, and Peking. All goods from the north or the south must go by Nan-tchang-fou.

When we call Kiang-si a poor province, we refer to agricultural produce, for its manufactures have been among the most important in China for centuries past. This province contains all the largest porcelain factories, and Nan-tchang-fou is naturally the repository for the sale of their productions. It contains several immense shops, filled with china and porcelain of every kind, from those great urns covered with richly coloured reliefs, representing various scenes in Chinese life, to tiny cups, so frail and delicate, that they have been called egg-shell china.

The chief porcelain factory is at King-te-tching, east

of Pou-yang, on the banks of the great river which falls into that lake. King-te-tching is not a regular town, not being surrounded by walls. Nevertheless, it contains more than a million of inhabitants, almost all employed in the manufacture of china. It is difficult to describe the bustle and activity that reigns throughout the town. All day long clouds of smoke and columns of flame ascending from its chimneys, and at night the whole place appears on fire—a stranger would imagine it was one immense conflagration. More than 500 separate factories, and thousands of furnaces, are constantly at work upon the China vases, which are sent in prodigious quantities into all the provinces of China, and thence all over the world.

In this, as in all Chinese manufactures, the division of labour is carried to an infinitesimal extent. Each workman has his particular department; one paints a certain flower; another a bird; one lays on the red colour, another the blue. A china vase, when finished and ready for sale, has passed through the hands of more than fifty different workmen.

Father D'Entrecolles, who was entrusted with the mission to Kiang-si in the beginning of the 18th century, and had, therefore, often occasion to visit King-te-tching, where a number of the workmen have embraced Christianity, has furnished us with very curious and detailed accounts of the manufacture of china. By the assistance of these precious documents and numerous specimens of *kao-lin* and *pe-tun-ze**, our manufacturers succeeded at last in making a perfect copy of the Chinese and Japanese vases, which were so long the envy and despair of the European imitators.

* Essential materials for the manufacture of china.

The manufacture of china dates from a very ancient period in the Celestial Empire. It was already in a flourishing condition under the dynasty of Han, about the commencement of the Christian era; and Chinese antiquaries still possess beautiful specimens dating from that time. They are not as transparent as those made at present, but the enamel is finer, and the colouring more vivid. Amateurs preserve specimens of some kinds of which the Chinese have lost the secret of fabrication; such as the double cups, in which the outer part is perforated like lace, and the inner cup solid and of dazzling whiteness. Then there are some ornaments with magic figures, which are only visible when the vessel is full. These figures are drawn on the inside, and the colours have undergone a particular preparation, which renders them invisible when dry. There is also a kind of biscuit china, the entire surface of which is covered with lines crossing in all directions, as if the vase were composed of a thousand different pieces. It looks like the most delicate and exquisite of mosaics. The secret of the fabrication of this kind, however, as well as of many others, is now entirely unknown.

According to the Annals of China, the whole art has been completely lost several times in the course of those tremendous revolutions which have so often shaken that Empire to its foundations. It had to be invented anew, and this was not always with as much success as before.

There is a class of Chinese amateurs who devote themselves exclusively to the collection of antique bronzes and porcelain, which they call *kou-toung*, or "old vase." They are esteemed as works of art, but

chiefly prized for the mysterious value attached to the things of past ages, though the Chinese workmen are cunning enough to imitate these kou-toung so as to deceive the most practised eye, and many antiquaries exhibit in their cabinets with the most perfect good faith, pretended ancient porcelain, which is two or three months old at the utmost. The makers of the sham kou-toung generally use a kind of reddish earth. After the first baking of the vessels they are thrown into a kind of greasy broth, where they undergo a second cooking, and after this they are buried in a sewer, where they lie for forty or fifty days, and are then dug up again. In this manner is prepared most of the "fine old china of the dynasty of Yuen."

The porcelain manufactory possesses a patron deity, whose origin is thus described by Father d'Entrecolles:—"As each profession has its particular idol, divinity being as easily conferred as the title of count or marquis amongst certain European nations, it is not surprising that there is a god of porcelain. He owes his existence to the following circumstance:—It is said that a long time ago a certain Emperor desired to have some china according to a particular design which he furnished. It was represented to him that it was impossible to execute his orders; but remonstrance served only to heighten his desire. As an emperor during his lifetime is the chief god of China, and sets no bounds to his will, the master manufacturers redoubled their efforts, and treated the unhappy workmen with the utmost severity, and these poor creatures lavished their money and their labour, getting only kicks and cuffs in return. At last, one of them, in despair, threw

himself into the blazing furnace, and was immediately consumed, and the porcelain which was baking in this fire came out perfectly beautiful and quite to the Emperor's taste. Since then this unfortunate man, at first regarded as a hero, has become the tutelary idol who presides over porcelain factories. It is not stated, however, that his example has led any of his countrymen to aspire to similar honours." *

The province of Kiang-si possesses another trade, less important and valuable doubtless than the china manufacture, but worthy of remark on account of its peculiarity, and the profits of which are not to be despised. This province is very marshy, and abounds in ponds; there is scarcely a cottager who cannot boast of at least one close to his house, and these are turned to account for the rearing of fish, which yield annually a considerable revenue to their cultivators.

During the last few years much attention has been turned in France to the art of pisciculture, as it has been called, and pains have been bestowed on the artificial production and rearing of fish. But, however new to Europeans, this art is very well known in China. In Kiang-si it is practised after the following fashion:—

In spring a number of men go round the provinces selling spawn. Their establishment consists of a wheelbarrow loaded with barrels containing a thick liquid more like mud than anything else. It is impossible to distinguish the smallest animalcule in it with the naked eye. For a few sapecks you may buy a bowlful of this mud, enough to sow a large pond; it is merely thrown into the water, and in a few days the young come forth. When they have attained some size they

* *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, vol. iii. p. 221.

are fed with tender vegetables chopped up and thrown into the water, the quantity being augmented as they increase in size. The growth of these fish is incredibly rapid. In a month at most they are strong and active, and require abundant nourishment. Morning and evening the proprietors of fish-ponds ransack the fields for suitable plants, which they carry home in enormous quantities. The fish rise to the surface, and throw themselves eagerly on their food, which they devour speedily, keeping up all the time a kind of murmuring noise, like a number of rabbits. Their voracity can only be compared to that of silk-worms just before spinning their cocoon. After being fed thus for about a fortnight they generally attain a weight of two or three pounds, after which they grow no more. They are then taken out and sold alive in the towns.

The fishponds of Kiang-si contain only this one kind of fish, which is of an exquisite flavour; if they are any other sorts, at least we never saw them, and we are also unaware whether the spawn undergoes any preparation before it is sold.

We stayed five days at Nan-tchang-fou, during which time our chief occupation was to arrange the rest of our journey to Canton. The Governor of the province, the Prefect of the town, and the functionaries, civil and military, all showed us the greatest attention, and took pains to carry out the plans we had formed.

The extreme heat of the weather, and our own need of repose, decided us to continue our journey by water. From Nan-tchang-fou we could follow the course of a large river as far as the mountain Mei-ling, which is just half way, and can be crossed in a single day; after this, the river Kiang would take us all the rest of the way to Canton. We knew that this route was

infinitely preferable to the land journey, particularly if we were furnished with government junks, and well-provisioned. Our efforts were crowned with perfect success; we were provided with a well-armed vessel of war for escort, and two superb junks, one for the Mandarins and their suite, and one for ourselves. We had expressly stipulated that we should be alone, that we might be at ease and free to attend to our exercises, and live as best pleased us; we took with us our own servant Wei-chan and a cook; a first-rate *artiste*, according to the Prefect of Nan-tchang-fou.

The commissariat department was arranged by the Governor on a truly sumptuous scale. In order that we might be treated perfectly according to our wishes, he issued a decree enjoining a contribution of five ounces of silver from every town we should pass, a sum amounting to about fifty francs. This was to be entirely devoted to the furnishing of our table; but as the towns stand close together along this river, we had a large sum of money over when we reached Canton. It will be seen further on to what use we put it.

It must be confessed, that the authorities of Nan-tchang-fou behaved very handsomely, and treated us with extraordinary pomp, and this dignified and liberal conduct contrasts strongly with the shabby treatment of the Russian colonel, who every ten years conducts an embassy from Kiaktha to Peking. According to a law, which is faithfully executed, the representative of the Czar has a daily allowance of one sheep, a cup of wine, a pound of tea, a jar of milk, two ounces of butter, two fish, a pound of salted vegetables, four ounces of fermented beans, four ounces of vinegar, one ounce of salt, two saucers of lamp-oil, and once in nine days a Chinese dinner of four courses.

The escort, which had accompanied us from the capital of Hou-pé, took leave of us at Nan-tchang-fou. The Weeping Willow bade us a touching farewell, and we accepted his tearful good wishes with gratitude. As we were about to embark, we were accosted by two worthy citizens, with pleasant, open countenances, who wished us a good journey. We knew the moment we looked in their faces with whom we had to do.

“ You are Christians,” we said.

“ Yes, father,” they replied, looking all around to see that they were not observed. We hastily asked news of the mission, and of our fellow-labourers, and were then obliged to leave them, to enter our junk.

The mission of Kiang-si, entrusted to the brotherhood of St. Lazarus, counts now nearly ten thousand Christians, dispersed throughout the province; they are in general poor, and very timid. Every year a certain number of conversions take place, but the propagation of the faith goes on but slowly; as it does every where throughout the Celestial Empire.

CHAP. XI.

DEPARTURE FROM NAN-TCHANG-FOU. — A MANDARIN JUNK. — COMFORT AND LUXURY OF WATER-CARRIAGE. — VEHICLES AND HOTELS. — FIACRE AND CABRIOLET STANDS AT PEKIN. — CHINESE LIGHT LITERATURE. — COLLECTIONS OF MAXIMS AND PROVERBS. — PASSAGE OF THE MOUNTAIN MEI-LING. — NAN-HOUNG, THE FRONTIER TOWN. — CHINESE ROPE DANCERS. — LITTLE FEET OF THE WOMEN. — ORIGIN OF THIS CUSTOM. — NAVIGATION OF THE TIGER. — RECOLLECTIONS OF OUR ENTRY INTO CHINA IN 1840. — VIEW OF THE PORT OF CANTON. — EUROPEAN VESSELS. — FIRST NIGHT IN CANTON. — OUR MARTYRDOM IN TARTARY. — SAVINGS ON THE ROAD BESTOWED UPON OUR SERVANT WEI-CHAN. — STAY AT MACAO. — DEATH OF M. GABET. — DEPARTURE FOR PEKIN. — ARRIVAL AT MARSEILLES IN 1852.

THE junk on board which we embarked to ascend the river Tchang was a little floating palace. We had a drawing-room, dining-room, and bed-chamber of exquisite cleanliness and luxuriously furnished, and the paintings and gildings lavishly distributed around were heightened in effect by that beautiful Chinese polish which has not its equal in the world. In the forepart of the vessel were the sailors' quarters and the kitchen, and the men worked the junk and carried on their various occupations without ever coming to our end of the boat. On each side were large windows, curiously cut, and filled in with glass instead of paper; a piece of extraordinary magnificence in China. It would be

impossible to enjoy a more convenient and elegant mode of river navigation than that with which the Prefect of Nan-tchang-fou had provided us. Accustomed, during our residence in China, to travel in merchant vessels and transports, we had not supposed the Chinese capable of fitting up a junk with so much comfort.

The river we were ascending was not very rapid, but when the wind was insufficient or unfavourable, recourse was had to the oars.

This was the case the first day. The captain, who no doubt had received minute instructions concerning the voyage, came to inquire whether we were satisfied with our accommodation, and whether the motion of his "ignoble junk" did not disturb our repose. "We are most comfortable; your delightful vessel is a Paradise; but the motion is very great towards the stern, and the sailors make a great deal of noise in rowing."

"These inconveniences can be removed," said the captain; "I will go and see to it." He made us a low bow, and went away.

A few moments after the noise of the oars ceased, and the junk appeared perfectly motionless; but on looking out of window, we perceived by the trees on the bank that we were passing rapidly along. We seemed moved by magic. The small boat had been launched, and by means of a rattan cable attached to the prow, we were being quietly towed against the current. This was indeed a polite attention; but we thought it right to tell the captain that it was unnecessary; being accustomed to the navigation of stormy seas, the gentle motion of a junk on a river was little likely to disturb us. "Whether the sailors row on board or in the boat makes no difference to the fatigue,"

was the captain's reply. "Besides, I only carry out the orders I received at Nan-tchang-fou. It is customary to tow junks when they carry Mandarins of high rank."

Such journeys as this are real parties of pleasure. You enjoy the most profound and undisturbed tranquillity, and the landscapes which are gradually unfolded along the banks, offer the amusement of an inexhaustible variety. We forgot for some days the fatigue we had suffered for more than two years. The paternal goodness of Providence granted us this interval of calmness and repose, as a compensation for our sufferings in the frightful deserts of Tatar and Thibet, and we accepted these hours of recreation from the hand of God, with hearts full of gratitude, as we had received with resignation those of trial and tribulation.

We passed two weeks in our floating hermitage, without once going out of it; so pleasantly situated were we. When we came to any town liable to contribution, whether lying on the right or left bank of the river, we anchored, and our Mandarin conductors went to the tribunal to demand the prescribed sum. Generally the payment was made with tolerable exactness; but there were from time to time some little difficulties to conquer. The functionaries did not always show any remarkable eagerness to bring on board the number of sapecks fixed by the tariff. They sometimes sent us deputations to try and strike a bargain with us, and to allege a thousand and one reasons why they should be dispensed from furnishing the whole sum specified. We were very accommodating, and willing to receive absolutely nothing, provided only that they would make out a statement declaring the motives of

the refusal, and signed by the authorities of the town. But no one would ever agree to this, and the matter always ended by their sending the sapecks. When we became too much encumbered with this hard cash, Wei-chan used to get them changed into bank notes, payable to the bearer, and kept them himself under lock and key; we merely taking a memorandum of their amount.

It is not customary in China to travel at night, either by land or water, and every evening we got snugly into port. Our anchoring was performed with considerable ostentation. The war-frigate used to precede us, and choose a suitable place; our junk and that of our conductors were brought up alongside; and when everybody was ready and in full dress, a gun was fired, and the anchors dropped, of course to the accompaniment of the tam-tam, and the discharge of fire-works. In the evening we used to go from one vessel to another to pay visits to our travelling companions. The captain of the frigate was an old sailor, originally from Fo-kien; and we could not manage to keep up very long conversations with him, as he only spoke the dialect of his own province, mingled with a few Chinese expressions, more or less disfigured; so, after having exchanged many gestures and much pantomime with him, we went on board the junk of the civil Mandarin. He was a Pekin citizen of the purest breed, and had most refined and elegant manners, as became a native of the capital of the Flowery Kingdom. By his language, also, it was easy to see that he came from the metropolis; but, unluckily, he did not much care to talk, and the melancholy expression of his face made it evident that he was suffering from some keen sorrow.

We respected his grief, therefore, and contented ourselves with making him very short and purely ceremonious visits.

In the morning, as soon as it was daylight, another gun was fired to announce the moment of our departure, and we began again our delightful trip. Railroads, steamboats, even stage-coaches, and all our rapid means of locomotion, are assuredly marvellous inventions, which every one admires, and which we never fail to appreciate when we are in a hurry to get from one place to another; but these hasty journeys are, it must be owned, seldom interesting. We may run over the whole world in this way without having much idea of the countries we have traversed or the nations we have visited. In Europe, at the present day, travellers are forwarded exactly like bales of merchandise. Henceforward those who wish to make travelling a pleasure and a luxury, will be obliged to come to China, and get a Mandarin junk, in which they may glide gently from province to province, over the rivers and canals by which the empire is traversed. The rich citizens of the Kingdom of Flowers find in all the great ports pretty boats, fitted up with all the comforts of Chinese civilisation, to be let on hire. These voyages, or rather long excursions, are made in the easiest style, the travellers stopping wherever convenience or the pleasure of the moment may suggest. As the most important towns are commonly situated on the banks of rivers, it is easy by this plan to study the country, and make yourself acquainted with the manners and customs of the inhabitants. In general the Chinese are not sedentary; and as, without crossing the frontiers of their own country, they can make themselves acquainted with almost all climates and all productions of the earth,

though their means of transport are slow and often inconvenient, they are always very ready to set off on a journey. In the southern provinces most of the travelling is done by water, but, with the exception of the aristocratic boats just mentioned, travellers find only dirty, crowded junks, where they are heaped one upon another, without seeming to think it at all unpleasant. They will remain shut up in them for months with incomprehensible patience, living on rice boiled in water, and passing their time in smoking and picking melon seeds. Those who are of an economical turn of mind, and wish to spare these luxuries, sleep almost the whole day, as well as the whole night. Nothing disturbs them,—neither heat, nor the smoke of tobacco or opium, nor the noisy conversations that are constantly going on all round them.

In the north the modes of locomotion are more fatiguing, but perhaps less tedious. People in easy circumstances travel in palanquins or in a kind of coach or waggon; others on horseback, on asses or mules, or they are drawn in a kind of wheelbarrow, or go on foot. The Chinese coaches are not on springs, and there are no seats in them, so that you must always sit cross-legged, like a tailor. As the roads also are terribly rough, you are constantly jolted up and down, and in imminent danger of a broken head. Prudent people take the precaution to have the sides of the vehicle cushioned, in order to soften a little the blows they are constantly receiving right and left. Upsets are of everyday occurrence, and this is perhaps one reason why the Chinese have acquired so much skill in the difficult art of setting fractured limbs; but it would certainly be a preferable plan to make better roads and carriages, so that the limbs might not want setting quite so often.

The most-frequented roads of the north are provided with numerous inns, which must not always be judged of by their names. To look at the pompous signs by which they are decorated you would imagine you had met with the most virtuous men in the universe, and that the landlord amidst his guests was a very patriarch surrounded by a numerous family. The inscriptions in large letters on the gates, promise you peace, concord, disinterestedness, generosity, all kinds of virtues, in addition to abundance of good cheer, and the accomplishment of all your wishes. But you have hardly crossed the threshold, before you discover that you have got into a den of thieves, where you will be likely to be both pillaged and starved. Experienced travellers know perfectly well what they have to trust to with respect to the inexhaustible abundance promised by the signs, and take care to have with them an assortment of provisions. It is customary for every one to carry a little bag of tea, suspended to his girdle; and those who are not inclined to content themselves with a kind of bun made of wheat and rice boiled in water, are also accompanied by an oblong trunk, divided into various compartments filled with potted meat, salt fish, and sour kroust. The Chinese call these provisions for travelling *kan-leang*; that is to say, "dry and cold."

In the considerable towns you do find sometimes tolerably well-kept inns, with private rooms for those who desire them; and such as Europeans, whose habits are not too luxurious, might occupy with pleasure, though of course they are not so elegant as those of our best hotels. You can, however, take your meals at the *table d'hôte*, or have the dishes you desire served to you separately, as in ours, and you are mostly well and promptly attended.

As it is customary to commence by drinking tea, and amusing yourself with little trifling dainties, the cooks (or, to give them a more stately and appropriate appellation, the "Mandarins of the Kettle") have time for their culinary operations. They bring the dishes ordered, in the most ostentatious manner, and when the waiters of the establishment put down the dishes before the guests, they sing out their names in a loud voice, so as to be heard by every one. This plan, as may be supposed, is found very useful in exciting the vanity of the guests, and inducing them to ask for expensive things, that perhaps they would willingly have done without if they had been dining in private. When the repast is finished, the head waiter of the hotel comes to the door, and commences a kind of song, of which the subject is the nomenclature of the dishes, and the burden, the sum total of the expenses. When the guests go out — and this, it must be owned, is a critical and solemn moment — those who have dined economically depart with an humble and contrite air, and try to avoid the notice of the company; while the Chinese lords, who have eaten sumptuously, and of high-priced viands, march out with their pipes in their mouths, their noses in the air, and casting proud and disdainful glances on all around. If the fashion were adopted in the taverns of Europe, of proclaiming aloud what everybody had taken, it is to be feared that many a guest would give himself an indigestion out of pure vanity.

The Chinese, when travelling, are habitually abstinent, and in some of the provinces they have a practice to which we found it very difficult to accustom ourselves. Before setting out in the morning, they swallow a large cup of warm water, in which they have previously

dissolved a few grains of salt. They are gifted with astonishing powers of appetite and digestion, which seem to be entirely under their control. They support hunger and thirst with the greatest facility, and yet, when the opportunity presents itself, they can swallow vast quantities of rice without suffering the slightest inconvenience. Their stomachs seem thus to be of almost unfathomable depth. We have travelled in districts of the north where there was really scarcely anything to be bought, and the Chinese, who did not like the trouble of carrying provisions, used to take at one meal all the food they required for twenty-four hours. In the morning, as soon as ever they were up, they breakfasted, dined, and supped all at once.

Many important cities of the south are built in the water like Venice, and the magnificent canals, that serve for streets, are furrowed by innumerable little boats. Peking offers a very remarkable peculiarity — namely, in some of the populous quarters, you find coach stands, where small vehicles, drawn by one or two mules, can be taken on hire by the hour or by the drive, exactly like hackney coaches and cabriolets in Paris and London. This custom is very ancient in the Celestial Empire, and does not at all seem to have been borrowed from Europe. Probably it existed when our good forefathers were running wild in the woods.

But although the Chinese have been in possession of coaches longer than we have, their coaches are still greatly inferior to ours. Those of Peking are scarcely any better than the detestable travelling waggons of which we have already spoken. They are smaller, more elegantly painted and varnished, and fitted up inside with red or green silk; but they are never on springs, and

this inconvenience is felt even more in the capital than in the country.

The principal streets, which were formerly paved with large flag-stones, not having undergone any repair for, perhaps, two hundred years, have lost almost as many stones as they have retained; so that you come continually to great square holes, and, as may be supposed, this is not very convenient for carriages; and they often proceed by a series of jumps from one side to the other.

Their wheels are, indeed, of enormous solidity, and they very seldom break; but that does not prevent the vehicle from upsetting. During our stay at Peking, we were induced once to take a drive in one of these abominable machines, and we were so atrociously maltreated in the course of it, that we resolved never again to have recourse to that method of locomotion. The Chinese accommodate themselves to it wonderfully, and sit tranquilly smoking their pipes, and seeming, by the elasticity that is so remarkable in them, to defy the roughest jolts and the most unexpected bumps. We never heard that any one of them had fractured his skull. The drivers of these coaches have no other seat than the pole, but they manage to preserve their equilibrium.

In general it may be said that all methods of locomotion in China are either fatiguing, or dangerous, or tedious, and these coaches unite all these advantages in one. The Mandarin junks are, unquestionably, the best and the most comfortable. Since leaving Nantchang-fou to ascend the river Tchang, our days had flowed on with indescribable calmness and rapidity, and we profited by this period of peace and tranquillity to

collect our notes, and revive the recollections which have enabled us to compose this narrative. This glance cast back upon our past tribulations was a source of pleasant emotion. One can only enjoy the sweets of repose after long fatigue. When the sailor has got into port, he likes to look back on the furious tempests of the ocean, and the ecstasies of felicity are reserved by Providence for hearts bruised and worn by suffering.

The sweet quiet interval of this peaceful voyage procured for us, also, a better acquaintance with the light literature of China. Our servant, Wei-chan, was a great reader, and whenever he went ashore he used to come back with a stock of little pamphlets that he afterwards devoured in his own cabin. These ephemeral productions of the ready pens of the literary class usually consist of tales, novels, poems, biographies of illustrious men or of notorious villains, and fantastic and marvellous stories of various kinds. The Greeks fixed the abode of their monsters and ephemeral creatures in the East, and the Chinese have returned the compliment by placing theirs in the West, beyond the great seas. There dwell their Dog-men, their nation with ears long enough to trail on the ground as they walk ; there is the kingdom of Women, and of the people with a hole right through them at the breast ; the Mandarins of which people, when they go out, merely pass a stick through this hole, and have themselves carried thus between two domestics. If the bearers are strong enough, they often string on several gentlemen at once.

These tales are a good deal in the style of Gulliver's Adventure, and some of them are full of the most disgusting obscenity ; for the Chinese are fond of

indulging their imaginations with this kind of reading, which, indeed, can teach them little that they did not know before.

We found in the collection of Wei-chan some very curious productions, that we read with the most lively interest. These were collections of proverbs, maxims, and popular sentences, from which we made some extracts that we will give here, as we believe the reader will peruse them with pleasure, as specimens of Chinese character and modes of thought. There are some indeed that have subtlety and salt enough not to be disdained by La Rochefoucauld.

“The sage does good as he breathes—it is his life.”

“One may be decorous without being chaste; but one cannot be chaste without being decorous.”

“My books speak to my mind, my friends to my heart; all the rest to my ears.”

“The wise man does not speak of all he does, but he does nothing that cannot be spoken of.”

“Attention to small things is the economy of virtue.”

“Raillery is the lightning of calunny.”

“Man may bend to virtue, but virtue cannot bend to man.”

“Repentance is the spring of virtue.”

“Virtue does not give talents, but it supplies their place. Talents neither give virtue nor supply the place of it.”

“He who finds pleasure in vice, and pain in virtue, is a novice both in the one and the other.”

“One may do without mankind, but one has need of a friend.”

“Ceremony is the smoke of friendship.”

“If the heart does not go with the head, the best

thoughts give only light ; this is why science is so little persuasive, and probity so eloquent."

"The pleasure of doing good is the only one that never wears out,"

"To cultivate virtue is the science of men ; to renounce science is the virtue of women."

"You must listen to your wife, and not believe her."

"If one is not deaf or stupid, what a position is that of a father-in-law ! If with a wife and a daughter-in-law, one has also sisters and sisters-in-law, daughters and nieces, one ought to be a tiger to be able to hold out."

"The happiest mother of daughters is she who has only sons."

"The minds of women are of quicksilver, and their hearts of wax."

"The most curious women willingly cast down their eyes to be looked at."

"The tongues of women increase by all that they take from their feet."

"The finest roads do not go far."

"When men are together, they listen to one another ; but women and girls look at one another."

"The most timid girl has courage enough to talk scandal."

"The tree overthrown by the wind had more branches than roots."

"The dog in the kennel barks at his fleas, but the dog who is hunting does not feel them."

"He who lets things be given to him, is not good at taking."

"At court people sing that they may drink ; in a village people drink that they may sing."

“Great souls have wills, others only feeble wishes.”

“The prison is shut night and day, yet it is always full; the temples are always open, and yet you find no one in them.”

“All errors have only a time; after a hundred millions of objections, subtleties, sophisms, and lies, the smallest truth remains precisely what it was before.”

“Who is the man most insupportable to us? He whom we have offended, and whom we can reproach with nothing.”

“Receive your thoughts as guests, and treat your desires like children.”

“Whoever makes a great fuss about doing good, does very little: he who wishes to be seen and noticed when he is doing good, will not do it long; he who mingles humour and caprice with it will do it badly. He who only thinks of avoiding faults and reproaches, will never acquire virtues.”

“For him who does everything in its proper time, one day is worth three.”

“The less indulgence one has for oneself, the more one may have for others.”

“Towers are measured by their shadow, and great men by those who are envious of them.”

“We must do quickly what there is no hurry for, to be able to do slowly what demands haste.”

“He who wishes to secure the good of others, has already secured his own.”

“The court is like the sea; everything depends upon the wind.”

“What a pleasure it is to give! There would be no rich people if they were capable of feeling this.”

“The rich find relations in the most remote foreign

countries ; the poor not even in the bosom of their own families."

"The way to glory is through the palace; to fortune through the market; to virtue through the desert."

"The truths that we least wish to hear are those which it is most to our advantage to know."

"One forgives everything to him who forgives himself nothing."

"It is the rich who want most things."

"Who is the greatest liar? He who speaks most of himself."

"A fool never admires himself so much as when he has committed some folly."

"When a song gives much fame, virtue gives very little."

"One never needs one's wits so much as when one has to do with a fool."

"All is lost when the people fears death less than poverty."

After a delightful voyage of fifteen days we arrived at the foot of the mountain Mei-ling, when we bade adieu to our Mandarin junk, and returned to our palanquin. At sunrise we began to climb the steep and rugged sides of the Mei-ling. There are several paths, but as they all present nearly the same difficulties, you do not give yourself much trouble about the choice.

The multiplicity of paths is occasioned by the great numbers of travellers and porters who are obliged to cross the mountain, which is in fact the sole passage for all the merchandise that the commerce of Canton is continually pouring into the interior provinces of the Empire. It is impossible to see without pain all these unfortunate creatures loaded with enormous burdens,

dragging themselves slowly up these tortuous and almost perpendicular paths. The men whom their poverty condemns thus to this terribly hard labour, live, it is said, a very short time. We remarked, nevertheless, among the long files of porters, some old men, bending painfully under their load, and scarcely able to support their tottering steps.

At certain distances you find bamboo sheds, where travellers go to refresh themselves a little in the shade, to drink some cups of tea, and smoke a pipe of tobacco, to restore their sinking spirits.

We arrived towards noon at the summit of the mountain, where there is a sort of triumphal arch, in the form of an immense portal; on one side of which ends the province of Kiang-si, and on the other begins that of Canton. We could not cross this frontier without emotion, for we had now at last set foot in the province which is in direct communication with Europe. It seemed as if we were only a short way from Canton, and Canton represented to us Europe — France, that country so dear to our recollections. We descended the mountain slowly and cautiously, on account of the masses of rock with which the way was thickly strewn, and we arrived in the evening at *Nan-hioug*. This town is celebrated for its storehouses and its vast port, where all the junks stop that come up the river from Canton. We went to lodge on the quay, in a spacious and magnificent communal palace; and as the last fifteen days had been so agreeable, we hastened to express to the Prefect of the town our wish to complete the journey down the river to Canton as before in a Madarin junk.

The next day all was strictly regulated in conformity

with our request ; but it was settled that we should pass the day at Nan-hioug, in order to give the captains of the junks time to make their preparations.

As soon as we rose from table we were invited to go and smoke and take tea in a spacious court under the umbrageous shelter of an avenue of great trees. It happened that there was then at Nan-hioug a celebrated troop of rope-dancers, and the Prefect of the town had thought proper to indulge us with a representation. When we entered the court in company with the Mandarins we were received with some music, which was certainly loud enough, but of rather equivocal pretensions in other respects. The ropes were all ready stretched, and the artists speedily commenced their evolutions. The Chinese are very skilful rope-dancers, as might naturally be supposed from their great elasticity and suppleness of limb ; but the most distinguished of the troop were two women, who, notwithstanding the incredible smallness of their little goats' feet, performed prodigies of agility.

We have already said that, though the women are forbidden to play any dramatic part, they are allowed to dance on the rope and figure in the exercises of equitation. They show themselves in general indeed more skilful than the men in these performances, and in the north of China there are ambulatory horse-riding companies in which the women excel in the management of the horses and the most difficult feats of the circus. One can hardly imagine how they can stand on one leg, pirouette, pass through hoops, and cut all kinds of capers, while the horse is galloping and bounding in the circle. The fashion of little feet is general in China, and dates, it is said, from the highest antiquity. Euro-

peans sometimes imagine that the Chinese in the excess of their jealousy have invented this custom in order to keep their women in doors, and prevent their gadding abroad. But though this jealousy may perhaps find its account in this strange and barbarous mutilation, there is no reason to attribute to it the invention. It has been introduced gradually without any deliberately formed purpose, like other fashions. It is said that in some remote antiquity, a certain princess excited universal admiration for the delicate smallness of her feet; and as she was besides gifted with remarkable attractions she naturally gave the tone to Chinese fashion, and the ladies of the capital adopted her as the type of elegance and good taste. The admiration for small feet made rapid progress; it was admitted that, at last, a criterion of beauty had been discovered; and as people have always a passion for new follies, the Chinese ladies sought by all possible methods to follow the fashion. Those who were already of mature age, however, resorted in vain to bandages and various means of compression; they found it impossible to suppress the legitimate developments of nature, and to give to their basis the elegance they so much desired. Young ladies had the consolation of obtaining some success, but not to the extent they wished. It was reserved for the succeeding generation to witness the complete triumph of little feet. Mothers devoted to the new mode did not fail, when a daughter was born to them, to compress the feet of the poor little creature with tight bandages that hindered their growth; and the results of these measures having appeared highly satisfactory, they were generally adopted throughout the Empire.

Chinese women, rich and poor, in town and country,

are all lame ; at the extremity of their legs they have only shapeless stumps, always enveloped in bandages, and from which all the life has been squeezed out. Upon these stumps, they draw pretty, little, richly embroidered boots, and support themselves upon them by constantly keeping themselves exactly balanced. Their step is a kind of hop, and resembles that of the Basque people when mounted on stilts. As they are practised in it from their infancy, however, the Chinese women do not find as much difficulty as might be supposed, not more than many lame people among us, who can often run pretty quickly. When you meet these women in the streets, you would think, from their little tottering steps, that they were just ready to fall ; but there is often some affectation in that, as they consider this kind of step graceful. In general they are so much at their ease, that when they think they are not seen they run and jump and frolic about quite prettily. The favourite game of young Chinese girls is battledore and shuttlecock ; but instead of a battledore they make use of one of their little boots, to send the shuttlecock backwards and forwards ; and as they sometimes pass whole days in this sport, one may venture to conclude that they do not suffer much pain or fatigue from the stumps that serve them for feet.

All the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire are mad upon this point of the little feet of women, and young girls who have not been properly tortured with bandages in their infancy find it no easy matter to get married. The mothers, therefore, are of course extremely solicitous upon this point. The Mantchoo Tartar women have preserved the use of feet as large as nature made them ; but the manners of the country have, never-

theless, influenced them so far that they have invented shoes with very high soles, terminating in a point, upon which they can totter even more lamely than their Chinese sisters.

This fashion of little feet is unquestionably most barbarous, absurd, and injurious to the development of the physical strength; but what means are there of putting a stop to the deplorable practice? It is decreed by fashion, and who would dare resist her dictates? The Europeans, besides, have no right to be so very severe upon the Chinese; for they also set a considerable value upon small feet, and many of them subject themselves to pain every day by wearing shoes that are not really large enough for them. What would the Chinese women say, too, if any one should tell them that beauty does not consist in having imperceptible feet, but it does in having an intangible waist, and that, though it is not desirable to have the feet of a goat, it is to have the shape of a wasp?

Who knows but that the Chinese and European ladies would end by making mutual concessions, and adopting both fashions at once? Under pretext of increasing their beauty, they would not fear to disfigure completely the works of their Creator.

The performance of the rope-dancers lasted all the evening, and their manœuvres were very amusing; but we could only give them a divided attention, for the thought that in a few days we should be at Macao occupied us incessantly, and occasioned us too lively emotion to permit of our bestowing due admiration on their skill.

The next morning we embarked on board the junks, which were built and decorated precisely like those

that had carried us as far as the mountain of Mei-ling. What now remained to us of our long and toilsome journey was nothing more than an agreeable excursion. We had nothing to do but to allow ourselves to float quietly on to Canton. As soon as the anchor was raised, and that our junk began to move rapidly on her way, the recollections of having ascended this river in 1840, on our first entrance into the Empire, came thronging back into our minds, and filling them with sweet melancholy. This is what we wrote at that time to some kind friends in France, on giving them an account of our departure from Canton, and our first introduction into China. Our letter was dated from a mission situated at a short distance from the Mei-ling mountain:—

“Towards six o'clock they made my toilette, *à la Chinoise*. They shaved my head, with the exception of the spot at the top, on which I have now been letting the hair grow these two years past; they then put me on a false head of hair, which they arranged in plaits, and I found myself in possession of a magnificent tail, that descended nearly to my knees. My complexion, not too fair before, as you know, was artificially improved by the addition of a yellowish tinge all over it; my eyebrows were cut off, in the fashion of the country; the long and thick moustaches, that I had been cultivating for some time, disguised the European cut of my nose, and, finally, Chinese robes completed my metamorphosis.

“As soon as it was dark, we took our way to the junk, that, proceeding up the river from Canton, was to conduct us to Nan-lioung on the confines of the province of Kiang-si. A great Chinese fellow, mounted on a

long system of legs, opened the march ; the courier followed him. I followed the courier, and a Chinese seminarist, bound for the mission of Kiang-si, followed me ; so that we formed a kind of thread to guide ourselves through the great labyrinth called Canton."

This city, as I said it, produced on me the impression of one great ambuscade. Its streets are narrow, tortuous, and winding like a corkscrew. You might suppose it was not true for the people of Canton, that the shortest line between any two given points was a straight one.

Now, if to these capricious-looking streets, with the fronts of the houses all whimsically carved, you throw in a profusion of little lanterns, big lanterns, lanterns of all shapes and sizes, ornamented with Chinese characters of all colours, you will have an idea of Canton seen hastily by lamp-light.

"Amidst all the immense population by which the streets were thronged, our grand business was not to lose sight of each other, or break the chain that our party formed. But, alas! presently we found it was broken. At the corner of a dark street, the courier who formed the next link to me lost sight of the Chinese who preceded him, and who alone knew the way. Once out of sight, in which direction were we to look for him? The street we were in was no thoroughfare, and we did not know which of the turnings he had taken. Our perplexity was great, so we cried aloud for our guide in all directions, and fortunately at last he made his appearance. Having noticed that no one was following him, he had retraced his steps, and picked us up again just where he had dropped us. We then resumed our march gaily, and soon found our-

selves, with thankful hearts, on board our junk. The crew had not yet finished their preparations, and we could not go on till the next day, so that we passed the night in the river, opposite the town, and, so to speak, under the very beard of the Viceroy.*

“The river of Canton during the night presented really the most fantastic spectacle I had ever witnessed. It seemed to be almost more populous than the town. The water is covered by a prodigious quantity of vessels of all dimensions and of indescribable forms. The greater part are shaped like fish ; and among these the Chinese have chosen for models those of the most extraordinary figure. Some of the vessels are built like houses, and these have rather an equivocal reputation ; but all are richly decorated ; many resplendent with gilding, and elegantly carved into transparent lace-work, like the wood carvings of some of our ancient cathedrals. All these floating habitations, hung round with pretty lanterns, are cruising about incessantly, without ever becoming entangled one with the other. The skill of their occupants in this respect is really admirable ; you see that they are an aquatic population : born, living, and dying on the water.

“Every one seems to find on the river whatever is necessary for his subsistence. During the night I was amusing myself a long while in watching the passing and repassing before our junk of a crowd of small craft, that were nothing else than provision-shops ; bazaars in miniature. They were selling in them soup, fried

* This viceroy was Ki-chan, and we did not then imagine we should one day become acquainted with him in the capital of Thibet.

fish, rice, cakes, and fruit, &c.; and, to complete the effect of the picture, you must add the incessant beating of tam-tams, and letting off of fireworks.

“The next day, Wednesday, we set off early in the morning, with hearts full of hope. Our little bark suited us delightfully; the crew was not numerous, consisting only of three young men, who were the sailors and their aged mother, who sat at the helm and filled the office of pilot. They appeared simple-hearted fellows, and we rejoiced at this, as we thought they would not be sharp enough to find us out.

“The Tigris, as this part of the river is called by Europeans, did not display any remarkable scenery on its banks. It goes on winding through a long chain of mountains, and when its rather shallow bed is not enclosed between high-pointed rocks, it shows on both banks more or less extensive plains of fine whitish sand; some fields of rice and wheat, and rich plantations of bamboo and weeping willow; many high hills, for the most part sterile and bare; some lightly covered by a layer of reddish soil, and some scattered groups of pines, and withered grass on which buffaloes were carelessly feeding. These are the things that meet the eye as you proceed up the river.

“In several places we saw enormous masses of calcareous stone, that look as if they had been cut by the hand of man from the summit to the base, in order to open a passage for the river. I asked the Chinese whether they could account for this, and the question did not puzzle them the least in the world. They said, ‘Oh, yes; the Emperor Yao, aided by his Prime Minister, Chan, divided this mountain, to facilitate the flowing off of the waters after the great inundation.’

This great inundation, according to the Chinese chronology, corresponds to the time of Noah's deluge.

“One of the shores rose perpendicularly in a colossal wall of a single block, and was enriched besides by a phenomenon, which I was a long time without comprehending. I could see at a great height on the rock two kinds of galleries cut in it, upon which were moving something like human figures amidst innumerable lights. From time to time some flaming matter fell from these galleries and was extinguished in the river. As our junk approached the spot, we saw moored at the base of the rock a crowd of little skiffs, filed with passengers. It was a celebrated place of idolatrous pilgrimage. Those who came to practise their superstitious rites there passed from their boats into a subterranean passage, and then ascended by a staircase cut in the rock to the upper galleries. There are found here certain idols that attract pilgrims from a great distance.”*

In passing up the river again, after an interval of six years, we took pleasure in recalling our former impressions, and in contemplating the points that had struck us forcibly at the period of our entrance into China. We saw again with emotion the mountains that form a sort of natural dike to the waters of the Tigris; that pagoda dug in the living rock; those custom-house officers ranged along the shore, who in our former passage had given us so many frights. By degrees, as we advanced, the bed of the river enlarged itself, and the Canton junks became more numerous. The sound of the oars and the shrill nasal song of the

* *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, No. 88. p. 212., &c.

sailors filled the air with a wild and melancholy harmony, that we listened to with a mingled feeling of joy and sadness. It seemed to us as if we were about to enter the Celestial Empire for the first time, and had just bade adieu for ever to the European colonies of Canton and Macao. But, instead of that, we were now about to see them once more!

On the sixth day after our departure from Nanhiong, the Tigris had ceased to roll its blue waters through mountains; and we entered on a richly cultivated plain, where from time to time we inhaled a powerful and invigorating breeze, that seemed to expand our chests. It was a breeze from the sea, and Canton was not far off! Standing motionless on the deck of the junk, straining our eyes in that direction, we felt all the tremor that precedes the strong emotions of a return after long absence. The last rays of the sun were just fading on the horizon, when we perceived something like an immense forest, stripped of its leaves and branches, and retaining only the trunks of the great trees. The current, the breeze, and the tide, were now sweeping us on rapidly to the roads of Canton; and soon, among the innumerable masts of Chinese junks, we distinguished some more elevated than the rest, and the peculiar structure of whose yards made us give a sudden start, and filled our eyes with tears. Among the native vessels of China arose the grand and imposing forms of a steam-ship and several East India-men; and amidst the flags of all colours that were waving in the air, we perceived those of the United States, of Portugal, and of England. That of France was not among them; but when one has been long at the other side of the world, on an inhospitable soil, in

China, in short, it seems that all the people of the West form one great family. The mere sight of a European flag makes the heart beat, for it awakens all the recollections of our country.

In traversing the port of Canton on our Mandarin junk, our eyes sought with eager curiosity for all that was not Chinese. We passed alongside of an English brig, and we could not gaze enough at the sailors in their glazed hats, who, ranged in a line along the deck, were watching us passing; assuredly without suspecting that they had under their eyes two Frenchmen just returned from the high table-land of Asia. Probably they were amusing themselves at our Chinese costume, while we were going into ecstasies at their astonishing physiognomies. Those rubicund visages, those blue eyes, those long noses and fair hair, those curious narrow clothes, pasted, as it seemed, upon their limbs—how droll it all was! A pretty trim little vessel, painted green and covered with a white awning, now passed us; and in it were seated three European gentlemen, smoking cigars, enjoying apparently a pleasure trip. How grotesque in the eyes of an Asiatic would their costume have appeared! They wore black hats and white trousers, waistcoats, and jackets. A Thibet man would have burst out laughing to see those faces, naked of beard or moustache, but having instead a bunch of red curly hair on each cheek. We understood now how absurd Europeans must look in countries which have no knowledge of their customs and fashions.

After making many intricate turns through this vast port, we landed at last at a little wharf, where a Mandarin was waiting for us. They put us into palanquins, and we were transported at a rapid pace to the

centre of the town, and to the house of a civil functionary of inferior rank.

At length, then, we had reached Canton! This was in the month of October, 1846, six months after our departure from Lha-ssa.

When we quitted the capital of Thibet, it seemed to us as if we should never reach the end of the journey we were undertaking. It appeared to be full of so many difficulties and hardships, that in all human probability we should perish of fatigue and privation on the way; but Providence had been our guide, and led us in perfect safety through all the dangers by which we had been surrounded. As soon as we had entered the apartments assigned to us, we fell on our knees, and returned thanks to God for all the mercies He had showered upon us during these laborious journeys—journeys that were truly undertaken in the hope of glorifying His name and extending His kingdom upon earth.

A short time after our arrival at Macao, we received a visit from a long Chinese, who presented himself in the quality of official interpreter to the administration. After he had made an imposing display of his whole stock of knowledge of English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, we told him that if he would be so kind as to speak Chinese, we should probably get on a great deal better; but to this he would not agree. Under the pretext that he was an interpreter, the wretched man persisted in his unintelligible jargon. We asked him whether M. van Bazel, the Dutch Consul, was then at Canton, and as he replied, "Yes! yes! Signor!" we begged him to get a letter carried for us to that gentleman immediately.

We had known M. van Bazel a long time, and we

knew how much sympathy and devotion he had always shown to the Catholic missionaries. We begged him to send us some newspapers, as we had had no news from Europe for more than three years.

The interpreter departed on this errand, and soon came back, accompanied by a porter, carrying an enormous bale of English newspapers, to which the Dutch Consul had had the kindness to add some bottles of claret, in order to help us, as he said, to revive the recollections of our country.

We passed the whole night rummaging in this incoherent mass of news that was piled up in the middle of our room, and in one of the very first newspapers that chance threw into our hands, we read an article that we thought rather curious. It was as follows:—

“We have lately received intelligence of the lamentable death of the two fathers of the Mongol Tartar Mission.” After a slight glance at the Tartar countries, the author of the article continues:—

“A French Lazarist of the name of Huc took up his abode about three years ago among some Chinese families established in the valley of Black Waters, about six hundred miles from the Great Wall. Another Lazarist, whose name is not known to us, joined him with the purpose of forming a mission for the conversion of the Mongol Buddhists. They studied the Tartar language with the Lamas of the neighbouring monasteries; and it appears that, having been regarded as foreign Lamas, they were treated in a friendly manner, especially by the Buddhists, who are very ignorant, and who took the Latin of their breviaries for Sanscrit, which they do not understand, but for which they have much veneration.

“When the Missionaries believed themselves sufficiently instructed in the language they proceeded into the interior, with the intention of commencing the work of conversion. After that period very little was heard of them, until in May last information was received that they had been fastened to the tails of wild horses and dragged to death. The immediate cause of this event is not yet known.”

It may well be imagined that this article astonished us a little; and we thought we had some reason to doubt its perfect accuracy. Nevertheless, all the details were so well arranged, that the whole really seemed to bear upon it the stamp of truth, and nothing less than our return in person, safe and sound, seemed capable of refuting it.

On the following day we held at an early hour a grand reception, at which were assembled all the high dignitaries of Canton, and the Mandarins who had accompanied us from the capital of Kiang-si. Our journey being concluded we thought it would be proper to render publicly our accounts to the Chinese administration. We therefore ordered our servant Wei-chan to bring in all the money that we had saved since our departure from Nan-tchang-fou. There was an enormous heap of it, so that the eyes of the assistants quite sparkled as they looked at it.

“There is,” said we, “a considerable sum. According to the orders of the governor of Kiang-si, all the towns through which we passed had to pay us a contribution for our maintenance, but our conscience forbade us to incur any unnecessary expense. This money therefore must now be resigned to those to whom it belongs. If it is yours,” we added, addressing the functionaries of

Canton, "take it." They protested with energy, that they had no claim to this money.

The Mandarins of our escort, to whom we offered it, did the like; every one displayed a disinterestedness truly exemplary, and all unanimously declared, that this sum having been legally allotted to us, could belong to no one else but to ourselves.

We replied that Missionaries did not leave their home to go and amass riches in foreign countries. "Your Government," we said, "having forced us to leave Thibet, and having brought us against our own will, to Canton, we could not help travelling at its expense; but now that we are about to quit the Empire, we do not wish to carry away a single sapeck. Since no one else seems to lay claim to this money, we would ask whether it may be allotted to our servant. Does any one object to our proposal?"

The council having signified its approval of this suggestion, we informed Wei-chan that this little treasure belonged to him, and for fear the Mandarins should afterwards take it into their heads to seize upon it, we advised him to carry it away immediately and place it in security. Wei-chan did not wait to be told twice, but instantly took possession of the cash and disappeared, and we never saw him again.

The Imperial Commissioner Ky-yn was still at that time Viceroy of the province of Canton. He offered us a junk to take us the same day to Macao; but, as we expressed a wish to remain for a while at Canton, where we had some European friends, we were escorted, at our request, to the Dutch factory. The excellent M. van Bazel sent a receipt for us to the Viceroy, and from that moment our official relations with the Chinese authorities were terminated.

Two days afterwards we had clasped in our arms our old friends and dear brethren at Macco. For a long time we felt in the midst of them like men awakened from a deep sleep. We were astonished to see no longer around us the Thibetan, Tartar, and Chinese physiognomies, and to hear sounding in our ears only that beautiful native tongue whose harmonious accents made every fibre of our souls thrill with joy, and our eyes gush full of delicious tears. France was still far from us, and yet we seemed to have found it again. There was in the roads a French corvette, *La Victorieuse*, and we used to like to go and walk on the sea-shore merely to look at the flag floating at its mast. When we went to visit our little France, as we called it, we seemed to be breathing the air of our country and living in the very midst of it.

A month after our arrival at Macao, M. Gabet, forgetting his infirmities and sufferings, and listening only to his devotion to the sacred cause in which he was engaged, embarked for Europe, in the hope of exciting the zeal and charity of the Catholics in favour of the interesting populations of Tartary and Thibet, for whose salvation he would gladly have laid down his life. We hoped at the time soon to meet again this companion of all our wanderings, the friend whose existence was in some measure identified with our own. But such was not the will of God. One day we received the afflicting news that this indefatigable and courageous Missionary had yielded his last breath on the coast of Brazil. When amid the snows of high Asia, we had been so solicitous to recal the vital warmth into the nearly frozen limbs of our friend, we little thought that God had appointed

him to find a grave on the burning shores of South America.

After a tolerably long residence at Macao, we ourselves set off once more on the road to Peking, thus traversing China for the third time, and, as we have already stated in our former work, the shattered state of our health subsequently obliged us to return to France, after having visited on our way India, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria.

We embarked first for China in the year 1838, and we were not permitted to see our native country again till 1852. We landed at last in the month of June at the period of the glorious solemnities of the Fête-Dieu, when the city of Marseilles presented a spectacle that will never be effaced from our recollection. O God! how beautiful was our Catholic France; how worthy of the love of all her children! Blessed be the Lord that He permitted us to endure some sufferings among foreign nations, since He reserved for us in the end such happiness as few men have ever felt, and which our feeble and imperfect powers are altogether inadequate to express.

I N D E X.

- ABSOLUTISM**, its perfection in China, i. 86.
“Abstinent Women,” sect of, ii. 236.
Academy, the famous Imperial, of Han-Lin, i. 95.
Actors, Chinese, character of, i. 265. 267.
Acupuncture, ii. 12.
Advertisements, Chinese, ii. 75.
Ages, Chinese classification of various, ii. 224.
Agricultural festival, the celebrated annual, i. 92.; ii. 298.
Agriculture, state of, in China, ii. 303. Watchful care of the farmers, 305.
Vegetable productions, 307. The Water-lily, 308. Imperial rice, 311.
Corn, 313. Night-blowing corn, 313. Observant character of the Chinese on agriculture, &c., 313.
Almanac, the Imperial, i. 98.
Americans (Ya-me-li-kien), i. 346.
Ancestors, worship of, ii. 221.
Animals, of the Chinese Empire, ii. 120.
Annalists, of the Celestial Empire, duties of, i. 95.
Annals, the, of China, i. 95. 102.
Antiquaries, Chinese, ii. 380.
Apathy, political, of the Chinese, i. 96.
Arabs, their intercourse with China, i. 338, *et seq.*
Arches, triumphal, erected to virgins and widows, i. 12. Those at Ning-po, 22.
Architecture of Chinese halls of justice, i. 40. Character of Chinese, ii. 169. Ancient towers, 170. Religious, of the Chinese, 201.
Areca nut, fondness of the Mantchous for chewing the, i. 73.
Aristocracy of Khioung-tcheou, i. 26. Literary, 87.
Arms, Chinese, i. 401, 402.
Army, government of the, i. 93. Its constitution in the provinces, 101. Number of troops in the whole empire, 394, 395. Grand review, 399. Military and naval officers, 406. Nullity of the army opposed to Europeans, 407. Inexhaustible resources of China for a great army, 410.
Artillery, Chinese, i. 402, 403. Camel batteries, 403. Gunpowder known to the Chinese at a remote period, ii. 122.
Arts of the Chinese, origin of, lost in the darkness of ages, ii. 121.
Asia, remark of M. Drouyn de Lhuys on the causes of the great invasions of the barbaric hordes of, ii. 70. State of the European rule in Asia, 89.

- Asiatics, immutability of, ii. 49. Their ancient and modern governments, 55.
- Ass, method of hindering an, from braying, ii. 317—319.
- Associations (or houis) of every kind in China, ii. 80. Anti-gambling society, 81. Lao-niou-houi, or "Society of the Old Bull," 82. Pecuniary societies, ii. 144. Society for gratuitous coffins, 326. Society of beggars, 327. Society of the Holy Infancy, 356.
- Astronomy, College of, in Peking, i. 98. Ignorance of the Chinese of, ii. 377.
- Authority, Chinese respect for, i. 126.
- Bachelors, crupper, i. 308.
- Bandits, Chinese, ii. 251.
- Bibles scattered along the coast by the Methodists, uselessness of the, ii. 375.
- Blue Mountains of China (Thsin-ling), ii. 116.
- Blue River, (Yang-tze-kiang), the, i. 172, 173. 177. 262. 275. 325. 373.; ii. 108. 117. Shipwrecks on the, 382.
- Bombast of Chinese official reports, i. 113.
- Bonzes, magnificent monastery of, i. 33. The Bonze prophecy concerning the destruction of Tching-tou-fou, 80. Their persecution of the Christians in 712, 137. Contemptuous neglect of, by the Chinese, ii. 199. Method of perpetuating the sect of Bonzes, 200. Their ancient monasteries, 200. Their famous libraries, 201. Their holy island of Pou-tou, 201. Visit to the superior of the Bonzes, 205. An indiscreet novice, 207. Their respect for the written character, 209. Regarded as civilly dead, 275.
- Bonzesses, convents of, ii. 210.
- "Book of Places," the, or names and titles of all the functionaries of the Empire, i. 101.
- Books, Tatar and Chinese, published at the expense of the Government, i. 95. The San-dze-king, or Sacred Trimetrical Book, 115. The Sse-chou, or Four Classical Books, 116. The Ta-hio, or Grand Study, 116. The Tchoung-young, or The Invariable Centre, 118. The Lun-yu, or Philosophical Conversations, 121. The Classical Book of Meng-tze, or Mincius, 121. The Five Sacred Books (King), 123. The Book of Changes (y-King), 123. Destruction of the ancient books by the Emperor Thsin-che-Hoang, 125.
- Boots of honour, custom of conferring, ii. 73.
- Bouvet, Father, Chinese missionary, i. 147.
- Brandy, corn, manufacture of, ii. 338.
- Brick-tea, i. 14, 15.
- Bridge, celebrated suspension, of Lou-ting-Khaio, i. 9.
- Buddhism, ii. 185. Period of its introduction into China, 185. Legend of Buddha, 187. Dogmas and moral precepts, 191, 192. Buddhists persecuted by the Brahmins, 193. Causes of these persecutions, 193. Dispersion of the Buddhists through the various countries of Asia, 194. The "Gandgour" and "Dandgour," 201. Magnificent temple of Buddha in the island of Pou-tou, 202.

- Cadi of Cadis, office of, i. 360.
- Calendar, the Chinese, i. 129.
- Camel batteries, account of, i. 403.
- Canals of China, state of the, i. 201. Attention paid to the construction of, ii. 147. The great canal of the Emperor Yang-ti, 147.
- Cangue, punishment of the, i. 272. A citizen of Tou-ki-hien in the, 272. His deliverance, 273.
- Canton, appearance of, by lamplight, ii. 407.
- Carayon, M., the Lazariste, death of, i. 4. *note*.
- Castor-oil plant, the, i. 197.
- Cat-clock, method of making a cat tell the time, ii. 315.
- Celestial Empire (Tien-chao), a name of China, i. 350.
- Centralisation, existence of, throughout all the revolutions of China, i. 102
- Ceremonies, Court of. See Rites.
- Censorship, office of universal, of Peking (Tou-tcha-yenn), its duties, i. 94.
- Census, the, of China, i. 92.
- “Chain of Chronicles, The,” of the Arabs, i. 337.
- Changes, Book of (y-King), the, i. 123.
- Chan-hai-kouan, one of the gates of the Great Wall, ii. 113. 7.
- Chan-tong, first appearance of the cholera at, ii. 25. Province of, descendants of Confucius residing in, i. 89.
- Chan-yu-ting, or Hall of Holy Instructions, i. 355.
- Che-king, or Book of Verses, the, of Confucius, i. 124.
- Chen-woung, the Emperor, ii. 60. His minister, Sse-ma-kouang, 60.
- Children, adoption or purchase of, where a man has no male descendants, ii. 226.
- China and Chinese, origin of the words, i. 346, 347. Names borne by the country from time to time, 347. 349. The word Tchina, 347. Conquest of, by Tshing-che-houang, 347. Its relations with India, 348. The Arab name Sin-Sina and the Latin Sinæ-Sinensis, 348. Exclusiveness not a character of the ancient Chinese, 367. Evil forebodings concerning the Empire, 369. Future possibilities of Chinese civilisation, 411. Uniformity of the Chinese type, in face, manners, language, &c., ii. 45. The mutability of the East, 49. The inconstancy of the Chinese in matters of religion, 54. And in matters of government, 56. Compared with the French, 57. Liberty enjoyed by the Chinese, 78. Their liberty of the press, 86. Early hours of the Chinese, 103. Sketch of the geography of the Chinese empire, 113. Boundaries of, 113, 114. Extent of its entire area, 115. Mountains, 116. Rivers and lakes, 117. Climate, 117. Productions, 118. Chinese industry, 121. Arts and manufactures, 121. Decay of the productive art, 122. Early development of its internal trade, 125. Present state of commerce with Europeans, 127. Port of Canton, 127. Imports and exports, 127, 128. Chinese political economists, 130, *et seq.* The commercial heart of China, 145. Character of the true Chinese, 149. Coin of the empire, 150. Infinitesimal trade, 151. Religion, 173, *et seq.* Cordiality and sincerity rare among the Chinese, 218. Their hidden profligacies, 341.

China. See Porcelain.

Cholera, China the birth-place of the, ii. 24. Circumstances under which it first appeared at Chan-tong, 25. Terror of the inhabitants, 25. Its course through Asia to Europe, 27.

Chou-king, or Book of History, the, of Confucius, i. 124.

Christians, discovery of a family of, at Khioung-tcheou, i. 25. A Christian of Tching-tou-fou, 34. Cessation of persecution of, 35. Martyrs of Tching-tou-fou, 43. See Christianity.

Christianity in China:—Persecutions of Christians at Ou-chang-fou, i. 43. Immense numbers of, in China, 44. M. Guizot's embassy to China respecting concessions to Chinese Christians, 61. Existence of Christianity in China as early as the 5th and 6th centuries, 62, *note*. Report addressed to the Emperor concerning the Christians, and the Emperor's answer, 63. Edicts in their favour, 64. Insufficiency of the edicts, 66. Duty of the French government respecting its Chinese missionaries, 67. Services rendered by the missionaries to the Chinese government, 129. Chinese missions mostly unsuccessful, 135. Introduction of Christianity into China in the 5th and 6th centuries, 136. The monument and inscription at Si-ngan-fou, 137. The priest Olopen, 137. The Bonze persecution, 137. The Roman priest Sohan, 137. Liberality of the Emperor Tai-tsoung, 137. The priests Y-sou and Niu-chou, 138. The illustrious Kouo-tze-y, 138. Missions from the Nestorians of high Asia, 141. Timotheus, the Nestorian Patriarch, 141. Missions in the 13th and 14th centuries, 141. Plan Carpin and Rubruk, 141. Institution of an archbishopric in Peking in the 14th century, 143. The archbishop Jean de Montcorvin, 143. Foundation of Macao, 144. St. Francis de Xavier, 144. Father Ricci, 145. Missions of the 17th centuries, 146–150. The Christians protected by the Emperor Khang-hi, 148. Persecutions under the Emperor Young-tching, 148. Favour of the Emperor Kien-long, 150. Persecutions of Kia-king, 150. Abandonment of the missions, 150. Numerous departures of the new missionaries, 151. The Church never discouraged, 151. Difficulties in propagating the faith in China, 152. Present sterile state of Christianity in China, 153, *et seq.* Causes of this, 154. Motives of the government for persecuting the Christians, 155. Speech of the Emperor Young-tching to the Jesuits, 157. The Christian religion known by the name of Tien-tchou-kiao, 158. The propagation of Christianity regarded as a political movement, 159. Existence of religious liberty in the five free ports, 160. Chinese Christians in Manilla, 160. Chinese indifference in matters of religion, 161. An expected convert, 163. Community of Christians at the town of Tchoung-king, 205. Release of three Christians from imprisonment at Tchang-cheou-hien, 222. M. Hue's interview with some Christians at Leang-chan-hien, 230–246. "Kaio-you," the name of the Christians of China, 232. Imprisonment of the head of the Tchao family, 233. Christian women in China, 248, 254. State of Christianity in the province of Sse-tchouen, 302. Opinion entertained by the Emperor Young-tching of the Christian religion, ii. 197. State of Christianity in the province of Hou-pé, 240. M. Rizzolatti, 241.

- Chun, founder of the empire, ii. 289.
- Chusan, archipelago of, ii. 201.
- Civil government of the provinces, i. 99.
- Civil officers. See Mandarin.
- Civilisation, Chinese, origin of, unknown, ii. 255.
- Clet, M., his tomb in the "Red Mountain," ii. 239.
- Climate, the, of China, ii. 117.
- Coffins, Chinese notions respecting, i. 35. Society for gratuitous, ii. 326.
- Coin of the empire, ii. 150.
- College, National, of Peking, i. 98. The College of Astronomy, 98. The College of Medicine, 98.
- Colonial office of Peking (Ly-fan-yuen), i. 94.
- Commerce, administration of, i. 100.
- Commissariat, duties of the department of the, i. 100.
- Communal palaces, or Koung-kouans, i. 23. Grand reception of M. Huc at one, 167. Magnificent one at Kien-tcheou, 177.
- Communication, state of the channels of, in China, i. 200.
- Confucius, his ideas of government, i. 85. Hereditary titles of his descendants, 89. His descendants in Chang-tong, 89. His praise of politeness, 112. Extracts from his Ta-hio, or Grand Study, 116. Conditions on which he allows to sovereigns the right of governing nations, 120. His Chou-king, or Book of History, 124. His Che-king, or Book of Verses, 124. His Book of Spring and Autumn, 125. His philosophy a counterpoise to the Imperial power, ii. 56. Remarks on his religion and doctrine, 174, *et seq.*
- Conversation, polite, i. 211.
- Cookery, Chinese, i. 197. Talent of the Celestials for Cookery, 199.
- Cormorant fishing on the lakes, ii. 100. Description of the bird, 101.
- Couriers, government, ii. 278.
- Courts, the six sovereign, of the Empire, their duties, i. 91.
- Criminal jurisdiction, sovereign Court of, i. 93. ; ii. 246.
- Criminals, Chinese, i. 41. ; ii. 245. Treatment of, 246. Horrible details of a trial, 246. Their right of appeal, 253. The most ordinary punishments, 253. General and special pardons, 267. Treatment of accused persons, 268.
- Custom-houses, Chinese, i. 334, 335. Custom-house officers, 334.
- Customs, Chinese attachment to, i. 126. See Rites.
- "Cymbals of the Oppressed," the, i. 355.
- "Dandgour," the, of Buddha, ii. 201.
- D'Andrada, Fernand, his establishment of the Portuguese power in China, i. 144.
- Dchiamdchan, the Lama, i. 6.
- Dead, special dangers from the presence of the, ii. 30. Terrible act of vengeance, 33. Chinese customs respecting the dead, 216.
- Death, calmness with which it is viewed by Chinese, ii. 38.
- De Fontaney, Father, missionary to China, i. 147.
- De Mailla, Father, Chinese missionary, his letter on the demolition of the Christian religion in China, i. 149, 150.

- Desert tracts of land in China, ii. 322. 357.
- Desflèches, Monseigneur, Bishop of Sinite, his letter to M. Huc, i. 214.
- Despotism, restrictions on Oriental, ii. 87.
- De Visdelou, Father, Chinese missionary, i. 147.
- Dinner, Chinese, description of a, i. 42. Dinner party, description of a, 195. 198. Misstatements of Europeans respecting Chinese cookery, 197.
- Distilleries (Chao-kouo), ii. 340.
- Divination, treatise on (y-King), i. 123. The Koua, or lines of divination, 124.
- Divorce, Chinese law of, ii. 272.
- Doctors of medicine, ii. 3. 8, 9. Laws concerning, 29. Disgusting practice, 29.
- Drama, the, of China, i. 263. Theatrical tastes of the people, 263. Extensive collections of Chinese dramatic pieces, 264. Their literary merit, 264. Observations of M. Edward Biot on them, 264. Character of the audiences, 265.
- Drunkenness, frequency of, i. 334.
- Dufraisse, Monseigneur, his martyrdom, i. 43.
- Dykes on the Yellow River, i. 100.
- Early hours of the Chinese, ii. 103.
- Education in China, i. 98. 101. 110. Wide diffusion of primary instruction, 111. Difference between the people of the North and South, 111. Fondness for polite and decorous observance, 112. Chief branches of instruction, 114. Method of saying lessons in schools, 115. The San-dze-king, or Sacred Trimetrical Book, 115. The Sse-chou, or Four Classical Books, 116. Extract from the Ta-hio of Confucius in favour of self-improvement, 116—118. Inculcation of virtue, 119. Method of teaching the classical writings in schools, 123. Study of the Five Sacred Books, 123. Character of Chinese instruction, 125. The Chan-yu-ting, or Hall of Holy Instructions, 355.
- Emperor, the, his answer to the report respecting the missionaries, i. 59. His titles in the Chinese language, 85. His name of "The Son of Heaven," 85. His absolute authority, 86. Checked by public opinion, 87. His family, 89. His harem, 92. Government of his palace, 98. His body-guards, 98. An emperor's opinion of the law courts, 105. Character of the present Emperor, 412.
- English (In-ki-li, Houng-mao-jin), i. 346.
- Epistolatory correspondence, mode of, ii. 282.
- Etiquette, Chinese attention to the minutæ of, i. 112.
- Eunuchs of the palace, their former importance, i. 98. Their present political inactivity, 98. Anecdote of a eunuch in power, 357.
- Europe, names given by the Chinese to the kingdoms of, i. 345.
- Exclusiveness not a character of the ancient, but only of the modern, Chinese, i. 367.
- Famines, annual, in China, ii. 323.

- Feet, little, fashion of, among Chinese ladies, ii. 402. Origin of the custom, 403.
- Fey-yué-ling mountain, i. 11. 16.
- Filial piety the single governing principle of the Chinese empire, ii. 255.
Difference between filial piety felt and expressed, in China, 284.
- Fire, wells of, in Sse-tchouen, i. 292.
- Fire-engines, Chinese, i. 218.
- Fires, their frequency in China, i. 216. Pillage at fires, 217.
- Fireworks, Chinese fondness for, ii. 286.
- Fish, rearing of, in Kiang-si, ii. 382.
- Fishing cormorants, ii. 100.
- Fo-kien, province of, Christianity in, i. 157.
- Fou, a first order of town, i. 36. *note*.
- Fou, the Chinese prefecture so called, i. 99.
- Fou-hi, the founder of Chinese civilisation, i. 124.
- Fou-ki-hien, town of, i. 267, 268.
- Fou-lang-sai, Chinese term for Frenchmen, i. 346.
- Foundling hospitals in China, ii. 353.
- Fou-youen, or sub-governor of a province, i. 99.
- France compared with China in some respects, ii. 57. 84.
- French cemetery in Pekin, i. 130.
- Frenchmen (Si-yang-jin, or Fou-lang-sai), i. 345, 346.
- Gabet, M, his death, ii. 417.
- Gaming, passion of the Chinese for, ii. 80. 330. Excesses of the gamblers, 331.
- “Gandgour,” or Verbal Instructions of Buddha, ii. 201.
- Garden of Flowers, prefecture of the, i. 37.
- Gardens, Chinese, i. 188. 194.
- Garrison towns, condition and government of, i. 392.
- Gaubil, Father, Chinese missionary, i. 148. His letter on the persecution and dispersion of the Chinese Christians, 149.
- Gazette, Pekin, account of the, i. 95, 96.
- Geography, Chinese knowledge of, i. 337. Names given by the Chinese to the kingdoms of Europe, 345. Tendency of the Chinese for geographical inquiry of late, ii. 375. Geographical knowledge of a Mongol Mandarin, 374.
- Gerbillon, Father, Chinese missionary, i. 147.
- Gobi, desert of, or “Sea of Sand,” ii. 113.
- God, the idea of, expressed by the term Tien-tchou, i. 158.
- Government, Chinese, constitutive principles of, i. 84. Ideas of Confucius, 85. The Emperor, 85, *et seq.* The communal organisation, 88. Civil and military officials, 89. Machinery of the celestial government, 90, *et seq.* Central administration of Pekin, 91. The six sovereign courts or ministers, 91. The local administration of Pekin, 98. Administration of the provinces, 99. “The Book of Places,” or names and titles of all the functionaries of the empire, 101. Existence of centralisation throughout all the revolutions of China, 102. Rapacity of the Mandarins, 102. Venality of justice, 103. Chief causes of

- this, 105. Doctrines of political government of Confucius, 118. Conditions on which Confucius allows to sovereigns the right of governing nations, 120. Motives of the government for persecuting the Christians, 155. Injurious innovations of the Mantchous, 362. Their fatal effects on the empire, 365. Inconstancy of the Chinese in matters of government, ii. 56. Government condemnation of *all* religions, 195, *et seq.* The whole Empire governed by the single principle of filial piety, 255. The vast system of responsibility, 259.
- Great Wall, ii. 113, 114.
- Guards of the Emperor, i. 98.
- Gunpowder known to the Chinese at a remote period, ii. 121. Chinese fondness for, 286.
- Hackney coaches, the, of Peking, ii. 394.
- Han, dynasty of, conquests of the, i. 348.
- Han-keou, town of, its immense trade, ii. 145.
- Han-Lin, famous Imperial academy of, i. 95.
- Han-tchouan, town of, ii. 72.
- Han-yang, town of, ii. 101. Animation of the place, 101. Cool reception of the travellers at, 104.
- Harem, the, of the Emperor, i. 92.
- Han-jin, or men of Han, a name of China, i. 347.
- Heon, a title bestowed upon Mandarins, i. 89.
- Hiang-you, or "odoriferous" pastry, i. 33.
- Hien, the Chinese prefecture so-called, i. 99.
- Hing-ngan, mountains of, ii. 110.
- Hing-pou, or supreme court of criminal jurisdiction, i. 93.
- History, Book of (Chou-king), of Confucius, i. 124. Study of, in China, 320. The great work of Sse-ma-t sien, 321. Famous historical work of Ma-touan-lin, 321.
- Historiographers, College of, i. 95.
- Hoang-chou, or August Elevations, a title of the Emperor, i. 85.
- Hoang-ho, or Yellow River, the, ii. 117.
- Hoang-mao-jin, "Men of the Red Hair," Chinese name for the English, i. 346.
- Hoang-mei-hien, town of, ii. 285.
- Hoang-te, or August Sovereign, a title of the Emperor, i. 85.
- Hoang-tsao-ping (Yellow Grass Plains), valley of, i. 9.
- Hoa-yuen, or garden of flowers, perfection of, i. 37.
- Hong-kong, establishment of, i. 144.
- Hon-keou, town of, ii. 293.
- Horses in the south of China, ii. 363.
- Hospitality, instance of, i. 285.
- Ho-tsing, or wells of fire, i. 292, 295.
- Houen, the. See Metempsychosis.
- Houis, or societies. See Associations.
- Houng-tse Lake, ii. 117.
- Hou-pé, province of, i. 288, 324. Remarks on, ii. 297.
- Hou-pou, or the court for the management of the revenue, i. 92.
- Hue, the Abbé: Arrangements for his departure, i. 1. Farewell of the

Thibetan escort, 7. Aspect of the road, 8. Suspension-bridge over the river Lou, 9. Family of the conductor, 10. Crossing the Fey-yué-ling mountain, 11. 16. Creating a sensation, 17. Riot in the town of Ya-tcheou, 18. Departure from Ya-tcheou, 20. Arrival at Khioung-tcheou, 22. Discovery of a family of Christians, 25. Visit to a magnificent Bonze monastery, 32. Reach Tching-tou-fou, 35. Lodgings in the court of justice, 39. Retrospect, 39. Invitation to dinner with the Prefects of the town, 40. Attended by two Mandarins of honour, 46. The trial, 49. Appearance before the Viceroy, 71. Arrangements for the departure, 126. Last visit to the Viceroy, 128. Departure from Tching-tou-fou, 134. Observations on Chinese Christianity, 135, *et seq.* Honours paid on the road, 164. Grand reception at a communal palace, 167. Trickery of Mandarin Ting, 169. Arrival at Kien-tcheou, 177. Disputes with the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou, i. 181. Arrival at Tchoung-king, 205. A nocturnal apparition, 213. Letter from the Bishop of Sinite, 214. Departure from Tchoung-king, 218. Addition to the escort of a military Mandarin and eight soldiers, 219. Arrival at Tchang-cheou-hien, 220. Leave Tchang-cheou-hien, 225. Bad and dangerous road, 225. Arrival at Leang-chan-hien, 227. Letter from a Christian family there, 232. Imprisonment of the head of this family, 232. A trial demanded, 233. The trial presided over by the Missionaries, 237. Acquittal of the accused and punishment of the military Mandarin Lu, 243, 244. Triumphant departure from Leang-chan-hien, 246. Arrival at Yao-tchang, 257. Hotel of the Beatitudes, 257. Lodgings in a theatre, 259. Navigation of the Blue River, 262. Arrival at Fou-ki-hien, 267. Quarrel with a doctor, 270. Leave Fou-ki-hien, 274. Arrival at Ou-chan, 275. Departure from the province of Sse-tchouen, 288. Entry into the province of Hou-pé, 288. Arrival at Pa-toung, 288. 306. And at Kouei-tcheou, 325. Disembarkation at I-tchang-fou, 328. Terrific threats, 331. Arrival at I-tou-hien, 335. And at Song-tche-hien, 351. Hospitality of the Mandarin, 351. 371. Quit Song-tche-hien, 371. Navigation of the Blue River, 373. A disappointment, 373. Arrival at Kin-tcheou, 381. Leave Kin-tcheou, 414. Fatigues of the road, 415. The nocturnal procession, 419. Arrival at Kuen-kang-hien, 421. Dangerous illness, ii. 2. Recovery, 29. Arrival at Tien-men, 39. And at Han-tchouan, 72. Leave Han-tchouan, 94. Bad reception at Han-yang, 101. Arrival at Ou-tchang-fou, 109. Attempt to see the Governor of the province, 152. Forcing the guard, and obtaining an interview, 155, 156. Success of the visit, 161. Departure from Hou-pé, 237. Farewell visit to the Governor, 238. The tombs of the martyrs, 239. No provisions to be had, 244. A visit to the Prefect, 245. Journey to Hoang-mei-hien, 279. A storm, 279. Arrival at Nantchang-fou, 364. Solemn public supper, 367. Departure from Nantchang-fou, 386. Passage of the mountain Mei-ling, 400. Arrival at Nan-hioang, 401. A toilette à la *Chinoise*, 406. Reach Canton, 413. And Macao, 413. Conclusion, 415—418. Arrival at Marseilles, 418. "Hundred Families," a term for the people of China, ii. 368. Hurricanes of Tsing-khi-hien, i. 16.

- Ibn-vahab, his journey to China, and interview with the Emperor, i. 338, *et seq.*
- Imbert, M., his account of the salt and fire-wells of Sse-tchouen, i. 292—301.
- Impiety, laws concerning, ii. 273.
- Industrial exhibitions of the Chinese, ii. 124.
- Industry of the Chinese, i. 301.
- Infanticide, frequency of, ii. 342. Testimony of M. Delaplace respecting, 342. Methods of killing children, especially females, 347. Infanticide in Paris in the 17th century, ii. 349. Accounts of missions to China respecting, 351. Edicts against infanticides, 333. Work of the Holy Infancy, 356.
- Inns, description of the, of China, ii. 392.
- In-ki-li, a Chinese term for the English, i. 346.
- Inspector of Crimes, or Ngan-tsha-sse, the, of Sse-tcheouen, i. 48. His peroration, 53.
- Insurrection of the present time, remarks on the, i. 292.; ii. 100.
- Interest of money, ii. 132. Legal interest fixed at 30 per cent. per annum, 133.
- Interments, customs of the Chinese at, ii. 219. Mortuary repasts, 220.
- Islands, floating, description of the, ii. 95—97. Great numbers of in China, 97.
- I-tchang-fou, town of, i. 328. Lodging of M. Huc at, 328. His conversation with the prefect of, 329.
- Itinerary, the Chinese, i. 11.
- I-tou-hien, town of, i. 335. Its accomplished Mandarin, 335.
- Japan, Christianity in, i. 144.
- Judge, his responsibility, ii. 265.
- Judges, Chinese, compared with Roman judges, ii. 253.
- Judgment halls, description of the, i. 40. 48, 49.
- Juggling and sleight-of-hand, perfection of, in China, i. 267.
- Julien, M. Stanislas. His mastery over the Chinese language, i. 324. His publication on the travels of a Chinese in India, 337.
- Junk, a river, sketch of a passage in, i. 173, *et seq.* Junk travelling, ii. 387. Navigation of the Blue River, 377. 379. War-junks, 405.
- Junk races, i. 387.
- Justice, mode of administering, ii. 252.
- Kaio-you, the name of the Chinese Christians, i. 232.
- Kakkerlac, the insect so called, ii. 242. 296. Quantities of the, at Houn-keou, 295.
- Kan-Sou, province of, i. 15.
- Kao-pan (theatre of examinations), the, of Pa-toung, i. 307. 324.
- Kao-wang, the divinity so called, i. 128.
- Kan-fou, town of, ii. 125. Besieged and destroyed, 126.
- Khang-hi, the Emperor, the protector of the Christian religion in Pekin, i. 148. His death, 148.

- Khata, or "scarf of felicity," trade in the, i. 15.
- Khioung-tcheou, town of, i. 22. Discovery of a Christian family there, 25. Aristocracy of the inhabitants, 26.
- Khiou-ping, or nine orders of civil and military officials, i. 90.
- Khom-dan, town of, i. 338. 343.
- Kia-king, the Emperor, his exile of the Dragon of Rain, i. 223.
- Kiang rivers, appearance of the, ii. 408.
- Kiang-si, province of, ii. 297. Remarks on, 321. Uncultivated tracts in the province of, 357.
- Ki-chan, Chinese ambassador at Lha-ssa, i. 2. His improvements in the province of Sse-tchouen, 23.
- Kien-long, the Emperor, his additions to the empire, ii. 113.
- Kien-tcheou, town of, i. 177. M. Huc's disputes with the Mandarins of, 181.
- King, or the Five Sacred Books, the, i. 123.
- King-pou, or grand tribunal of crimes at Peking, i. 58.
- Kin-tcheou, town of, i. 381. The town in a state of siege, 386. Battle between the townspeople and the Mantchou Tartars, 387. Junk races at, 389.
- Kioung-tcheou, brick tea of, i. 14.
- Kiun-ke-tchou, one of the imperial councils, i. 91. Its duties, 91.
- Koua, or lines of divination, i. 124.
- Kouan-kouen, or Chinese bandit, punishment of one, ii. 245. Meaning of the term, 251.
- Kouang-fou, the, i. 90.
- Kouang-ping, son of the god of war (Kouang-ti), i. 290.
- Kouang-pou, or supreme court of public works, i. 94.
- Kouang-ti, god of war, and patron of the Mantchous, i. 290. Official worship paid to him, 290.
- Kouang-tsi-hien, town of, ii. 246. Punishment of a criminal at, 246.
- Kouan-tse, the political economist, his views, ii. 130.
- Kouei-tcheou, town of, i. 325.
- Koung, the highest title bestowed upon Mandarins, i. 89.
- Koung-kouans, or communal palaces, i. 23. Grand reception of M. Huc at one, 167. Magnificence of one at Kien-tcheou, i. 188. Its gardens, 194.
- Kuen-kang-hien, town of, i. 421.
- Kouo-tze-y, the illustrious, his character, i. 139.
- Ky-yn, imperial commissioner, i. 35. His report to the Emperor concerning the Christians, 62.
- Lagrenée, M., his mission to China, i. 34. His attempt to ameliorate the condition of the Chinese Christians, 61.
- Lakes, the, of China, ii. 117.
- Lampoons, Chinese, ii. 75.
- Language, Chinese, remarks on, i. 312, *et seq.* Its antiquity, 313. Its wide diffusion, 313. The written and the spoken languages, 313. The primitive characters, 313. Ideographic characters, 314. Reading and writing Chinese, 317. The vulgar style of language, 319. The

- academic style, 319. The Houan-hoa, or language of instructed persons, 319. Dialects of some of the provinces, 320. Supposed difficulty of the study of Chinese, 323. M. Abel Remusat, 323. M. Stanislas Julien, 324.
- Language, the Mantchou Tatar, i. 38.
- Lao-tze, the philosopher, remarks on the life and opinions of, ii. 177, *et seq.*
- Law courts, the Emperor's opinion of, i. 105.
- Laws, Chinese, ii. 254. The Ta-tsing Lu-li, or Laws and Statutes of the Grand Dynasty of the Tsing, ii. 254. Sir George Staunton's translation of this work, 254. Penal character of the legislation of the empire, 254. 257. The system of responsibility, 259. Unscientific character of the law, 261. Laws which regulate the conduct of officials, ii. 264. Responsibility of government officials, 265. Laws concerning marriage 271.
- Leang, the military Mandarin of M. Hue's escort, i. 128.
- Leang-chan-hien, town of, i. 227. Christians of, 230. 246, 247.
- Leao-tong, tobacco of, i. 113. 203. Country of, added to China, ii. 113.
- Le Comte, Father, Chinese missionary, i. 147.
- Leou-pou, or the six sovereign courts of the government, i. 91. Enumeration of them, and their duties, 91.
- Letters, Mau of, sketch of a, i. 109.
- Lha-ssa, Chinese ambassador at, i. 2.
- Li, Chinese measure of length, i. 6.
- Liberty, large amount of political, in China, ii. 78. Freedom of locomotion in China, 79. Liberty of the press in ancient Chinese institutions, 84.
- Libraries, public, do not exist in China, i. 322. The famous, of the bonzes, ii. 201.
- Library, the Imperial, of Peking, extent of, i. 320. The library of the great Buddhist temple of Pou-tou, ii. 204. Its librarian, 205.
- Lieou ("The Willow"), the Mandarin, ii. 167. Description of him, 167. Appointed to the escort, 167.
- Li-ki, or Book of Rites, the, of Confucius, i. 125.
- Li-pou, the, or highest sovereign court, i. 91.
- Literary aristocracy, the, or corporation of men of letters, i. 87. Its influence, 87. Almost the only nobility recognised, 89.
- Literary Composition, palace of, at Nau-tchang-fou, ii. 365.
- Literary Corporation, the, of Pa-toung, i. 307. Literary examinations, 308. Corruption both among the examiners and the examined, 308.
- Literature, government of, in the provinces, i. 100. Held in great honour in Fou-ki-hien, 268. The Wen-tchang-koun, or Temple of Literary Composition, there, 268. Low condition of, in China, 310. Contempt of the Chinese for the belles lettres, 311. Importance of Chinese literary monuments, 320. The historian Sse-ma-tsien, 321. The Annals of Sse-ma-kouang, 321. French translation of this work, 321. Historical encyclopædia of Ma-toun-lin; 321. Analysis of the work, 321. Chinese light literature, ii. 396.
- Locomotion, various modes of, ii. 391.
- Lou, the river, i. 10.

- Lou-ting-khaio, town of, i. 9. Bridge at, 9.
- Lo-yang, town of, first named the Central Kingdom, i. 349.
- Lu, a military Mandarin, appointment of, to the escort, i. 219. Caught in *flagrante delicto*, 231. Excluded from table, 234. His punishment, 244.
- Lun-yu, or Philosophical Conversations, the book so called, i. 121.
- Ly-fan-yuen, or colonial office of Peking, i. 94.
- Ly-pou, or sovereign court of rites, constitution of, i. 93.
- Macao, foundation of, i. 144. Its decline, 144. Return of M. Huc to, ii. 413.
- Magistrates. See Mandarins.
- Maize, Kao-leang, its cultivation in the province of Sse-tchouen, i. 200.
- Mandarins, character of the, i. 3. Ridiculous position of one, 19. Their communal palaces, 23. Their opium-smoking, 28. The Mandarin of Tching-tou-fou, 37. Their treatment of the Christians, 69. Titles bestowed on the most distinguished Mandarins, 89. Marks by which the various grades of Mandarins are known, 89. The name *mandarin* unknown to the Chinese themselves, 90. Probable origin of the name, 90. Rapacity of the Mandarins throughout the empire, 102. Sketch of the private life of a mandarin and his family, 103. The Mandarins of the escort, 128. Lessons they sometimes receive, 166. Trickery of Mandarin Ting, 169. M. Huc's disputes with the Mandarins of Kientcheou, 181. Description of a military Mandarin of the escort, 220. The veracious Mandarin of Tchang-cheou-hien, 221. Disputes with the Mandarins of Leang-chan-hien, 228. Catching a Mandarin in *flagrante delicto*, 231. Duty of a Mandarin when dead bodies are found under suspicious circumstances, 280. A valiant Mandarin, 332. The accomplished Mandarin of I-tou-hien, 335. The hospitable Mandarin of Long-tche-hien, 351. General conduct of the Mandarins, 354. Their responsibility for inferiors, 385. Their responsibility for suspicious deaths, ii. 33. Airs of a young Mandarin, 43. Boots of honour conferred on popular Mandarins, 73. Their conduct criticised by lampoons, &c., 75. Treatment of the tyrannical Mandarin of Ping-fang, 76. Degeneracy of the magistrates throughout the empire, 93. Restrictions on the marriage of Mandarins, 228. Their power and emoluments, 262. A scrupulous Mandarin, 333. A Mongol Mandarin, 372. His geographical knowledge, 374.
- Manilla, Chinese Christians in, i. 160.
- Mantchou Tartars, language of the, i. 38. Their generosity, 169. Their injurious innovations since their conquest of China, 362. Fatal effects of their policy on the empire, 365. Their exclusion of foreigners, 367, 368. Their battle with the Chinese of Kin-tcheou, 387. Their unpopularity throughout the empire, 413.
- Mantchuria added to China, ii. 113.
- Manufactures of the Chinese Empire, ii. 121.
- Marco Polo, his travels, i. 143. His account of China, 83.
- Marriages, Chinese, i. 250. Customs respecting, ii. 224, 225. Polygamy, 226. Obstacles to the marriage of civil and military officers,

228. Receiving a proposal, 229. The wedding, 230. Laws concerning marriage, 270.
- Materialism of the Chinese, i. 161.
- Ma-touan-lin, his historical encyclopædia, i. 321. Analysis of the work, 321.
- Maxims, collection of Celestial, ii. 397.
- Mayor, or Sian-yo, method of electing him, i. 88.
- Medicine, college of, in Pekin, i. 98. Chinese work on (Si-yuen), "The Washing of the Pit," 279. Medical jurisprudence of the Chinese, 279. Chinese medicine, ii. 7, *et seq.* 21. Profession of medicine free in China, 27. Disgusting practice, 29.
- Mei-ling, the mountain, passage of the, ii. 400.
- Melons, water, great number and beauty of those of Tien-men, ii. 41. Passion of the Chinese for the water-melon seed, 41.
- Mendicants, bands of, ii. 325. The "House of the Hens' Feathers," 328.
- Meng-tze, his classical book, i. 121. His place in the estimation of his countrymen, 121. Eulogium of M. Abel Remusat on him, 122. Compared with Confucius and Socrates, and Diogenes, 122, 123.
- Merchandise, display of Chinese, i. 229.
- Metempsychosis, belief in, of nearly all the pagans of Ho-nan, ii. 343. The Houen, 343.
- Methodists, Protestant, their labours among the Chinese, ii. 375.
- Military, government of the, i. 93.
- Military government of the provinces, i. 101.
- Military officials. See Mandarin.
- Mincius, the philosopher. See Meng-tze.
- Ming-jin, or Men of Ming, a name of China, i. 347.
- Monasteries, the, of the Bonzes, i. 33; ii. 200.
- Montcorvin, Jean de, archbishop of Pekin, i. 143.
- Montesquieu, his picture of Chinese government, i. 83.
- Monuments erected to virgins and widows, i. 21. Those of Ning-po, 22.
- Mosquitoes, swarms of, i. 415.
- Mountains, their appearance in the province of Sse-tchouen, i. 200.
- Mountains of China, ii. 113. 116.
- Mourning, Chinese, ii. 215. Singular method of lamenting the dead, ii. 216. Regulation sorrows, 217. Long period of mourning, 222. Laws concerning, 273.
- Music, Chinese, remarks on, ii. 287. Musical instruments, 287. The Yo-king, or Book of Music, 288. Idea we ought to have of the music of the ancients, 289.
- Musk, odour of, throughout the Celestial Empire, i. 21.
- Murder, terrific variety of the Chinese modes of, i. 281.
- Nan, a title bestowed upon Mandarins, i. 89.
- Nan-hioang, town of, ii. 401. Its vast storehouses and port, 401.
- Nan-tchang-fou, town of, ii. 364. Appearance of, 378.
- Nautical races, i. 387.

- Naturalists, Chinese, ii. 314.
- Navy, the Chinese, i. 101. 404. Number of sailors and of the war-junks, 404. Naval and military officers, 406. Inexhaustible resources of China for a great navy, 410.
- Nei-ko, one of the two imperial councils, i. 91. Its duties, 91.
- Newspapers, Chinese, i. 95, 96.
- Ngan-tsha-sse, the, of Sse-tcheouen, i. 48. See Inspector of Crimes.
- Ning-po, city of, great number of monuments in, i. 22.
- Niu-chou, the Christian priest, i. 138.
- Nobility, the, organisation of, i. 89.
- Officers, civil and military. See Mandarin.
- Olopen, the priest, i. 137.
- “One man and two eyes,” story of, i. 80.
- Opium, smugglers in, i. 27. Introduction of opium into China, 27. Immense quantity consumed, 28. Method of smoking it, 29. Strictures on opium-dealers, 29, 30. Deplorable consequences of opium-smoking, 30. Chinese and English opium, 31. English opium consumers, 32.
- Ou-chan, town of, i. 275. Description of the prefect of, 278.
- Ou-tchang-fou, persecution of Christians at, i. 43. 67.
- Ou-tchang-fou, town of, ii. 109. 112. Its importance, 112.
- Pagodas, vast numbers of, throughout the empire, ii. 172. Ornaments and decorations of the, 172.
- Palace, the, imperial government of, i. 98.
- Palaces, communal, or Koung-kouans, i. 23.
- Palanquin-bearer, the, i. 10.
- Palanquin travelling, i. 262.
- Pan-houi-pan, the Chinese authoress, i. 248.
- Pao-hing, viceroy of Sse-tcheouen, i. 71. His interview with M. Huc and his companions, 72—74. Portrait of him, 72. His despatch to the emperor, 75. His last interview with M. Huc, 128. His death, 132. *note*.
- Pao-ngan, or “Hidden Treasure,” the Mandarin, sketch of the private life of, i. 103. His two sons, 107.
- Paper, respect for even scraps of waste paper on which letters are written or printed, ii. 208, 209.
- Pardons, general and special, ii. 267.
- Parmentier, his introduction of opium into China, i. 28.
- Pastry, odoriferous, or hiang-you, i. 33.
- Pa-toung, town of, i. 288. 306. 324.
- Pauperism in China, ii. 322. 325. Bands of mendicants, 325. Causes of pauperism, 329.
- Peacocks, rarity of, in China, i. 197.
- Pecuniary societies, objects of, ii. 144.
- Pekin, local administration of, i. 97. Government of the Imperial palace of, 98. Great scientific establishments of, 98. French cemetery

- in, 130. Pekin Gazette, the, account of, 95, 96. Extent of the Imperial Library of, 320.
- Pe-lien-kiao, or sect of the White Lily, i. 157.
- Perboyre, his martyrdom, i. 43. 67. Scene of his death, ii. 94. 153. 239.
- Perocheau, M., his letter to M. Huc, i. 135.
- Persecutions at Tching-tou-fou, i. 43. At Ou-tchang-fou, 43. 67.
- Pey-chou, or saying a lesson at school, i. 115.
- Philosophical Conversations (Lun-yu), the, of Meng-tze, i. 122.
- Phou-yong Lake, the, ii. 117.
- Phy, a title bestowed upon Mandarins, i. 89.
- Physicians, Chinese, ii. 3. The regular practitioner, 5, 8, 9.
- Pigs, the sacred, laws concerning, ii. 275.
- Ping-fang, town of, ii. 75. Its treatment of a tyrannical Mandarin, 76.
- Ping-hou, the lake, ii. 95. Navigation of, 95.
- Ping-pou, or Sovereign Court of War, i. 93.
- Pipe for smoking opium, i. 29.
- Pisciculture in Kiang-si, ii. 382.
- Placards, Chinese, ii. 75.
- Plan-carpin, the missionary, his travels, 141.
- Poem, specimen of a Chinese descriptive, i. 189.
- Polarity of the loadstone known to the Chinese 2500 B. C., ii. 121.
- Police, the, of China, i. 100.
- Politeness of the Chinese, i. 23. 26. 112. Its antiquity, 112. Praised by Confucius, 112. Instance of politeness in the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen, 169.
- Political economy, Chinese, ii. 130. Kouan-tse, the celebrated economist, 130. System of Chinese economists upon interest of thirty per cent. 132. Tchao-yng, the economist, 133.
- Politics, aversion of the Chinese to discuss, i. 96.
- Polygamy in China, i. 251. Although existing, not a legal Chinese institution, ii. 226.
- Population of China, ii. 97. The method of registration, 97. Density of the multitudes in some localities, 98. Causes of the vast increase in the population, 99.
- Porcelain, manufacture of, ii. 379. Curious and detailed account of, by Father D'Entrecolles, 379. History of the art of, 380. The god of porcelain, 381.
- Porters, long caravans of, i. 14.
- Portuguese, their re-discovery of China, i. 143. Their foundation of Macao, 144.
- Post-office, the, unknown in China, ii. 281.
- Pou-tching-sse, the, of Sse-tcheouen, i. 48. Description of him 50, 51. His examination of M. Huc, 51, 52.
- Pou-tou, holy island of, ii. 201. Immense number of Bonze monasteries in the, 201. Beauty of the island, 201. Magnificence of its principal temples, 202.
- Pou-yang, lake, ii. 293. 295. Navigation of the, 320. Immense number of junks on the, 321.

- Productions, vast variety of the, of China, ii. 118.
- Press, liberty of the, an ancient institution in China, ii. 84. China and France compared, 84.
- Promenade, public, not known in China, ii. 101, 102.
- Proverbs, collection of Celestial, ii. 397.
- Provinces, administration of the, i. 47. 99.
- Punishments, the most ordinary, ii. 253. 266. Arbitrary infliction of, 254. Penal character of the whole legislation of the Chinese, 254. 257. For impiety, 273. A frightful example, 277.
- Rain, superstitious practices to obtain, in times of drought, i. 223. The Dragon of Rain exiled by the Emperor, 223.
- Readers, public (chou-chou-ti), of China, ii. 86.
- Reading, method of teaching, i. 115. Reading Chinese, 317.
- Reason, Doctors of, ii. 177. 185.
- Regattas, i. 387.
- Religion ; all religions condemned by the Chinese government, ii. 195. The emperor Khang-hi's Collection of Sentences, 196. Paternal instruction of Young-tching, 196. Formula of scepticism, 198. The Bonzes neglected and treated with contempt, 199. Magnificent libraries of the Bonzes, 201. Bonzesses, 210. Sect of "Abstinent women," 236. The "Doctrine of the Lettered," 174. Confucius, 174. "Doctors of Reason," 177. 185. Buddhism, 185 — 194. Inconstancy of the Chinese in matters of, ii. 54. See Christianity.
- Religious edifices. See Pagodas.
- Remusat, M. Abel, his eulogium on the classical book of Meng-tze, i. 122. His remarks on Chinese politeness, 206. His acquirement of the Chinese language, 323. His remarks on the restrictions of Oriental arbitrary power, ii. 87. His remarks on the life and opinions of the philosopher Lao-tze, 177.
- Representation, Palace of, in Peking (Toun-tchin-sse), its duties, i. 94.
- Revenue, the management of, i. 88. 92. Department of the revenue in the provinces, 100.
- Revolution, general presentiment of, in China, i. 369. Great number of revolutions of the Chinese empire, ii. 57.
- Rice wine, manufacture of, ii. 337.
- Riot in Ya-tcheou, i. 18.
- Rites, Tribunal of, i. 4. Constitution of the Sovereign Court of, 93. Book of (Li-ki), the, 125. Parting ceremonies, 132. Custom of offering hot towels after meals and on journeys, 168. Etiquette of ceremonious visits, 206. Polite conversation, 211. Singular character of Chinese politeness, 284—286.
- Ricci, Father Matthew, missionary to China, i. 145. His labours and death, 146.
- Roads of China, state of the, i. 200. The imperial high road, ii. 292.
- Robbers, Chinese, ii. 83. Summary punishment of, 83.
- Roman empire, called Ta-tshin by the Chinese, i. 137. Its introduction of Christianity into China, 137.

- Rope-dancers, ii. 402.
- Rubruk, the missionary, his travels, i. 141.
- Sailors, Chinese, i. 175.
- Salt, a government monopoly, i. 100. 334.
- Salt-wells in Sse-tchouen, i. 292.
- San-dze-king, or Sacred Trimetrical Book, i. 115. Analysis of its contents, 115.
- "Scarf of Felicity," or Khata, trade in the, i. 15.
- Scepticism; its frightful spread in China, ii. 196. Formula of scepticism, 198.
- Schal, Father Adam, missionary to China, i. 146.
- Schoolmaster, sketch of a Chinese, i. 109.
- Schools in China, i. 110. Chief branches of instruction in, 114. Description of a, 114.
- Science, establishments for the promotion of, in Peking, i. 98. State of scientific knowledge among the Chinese, 301.
- Serica and the Seres, i. 348.
- Shipwrecks on the Blue River, i. 379. 383.
- Shops, Chinese, i. 79.
- Sian-yo, or mayor, method of electing him, i. 88.
- Si-gnan-fou, monument and inscription at, i. 137.
- Si-hou, or Western Lake, the, ii. 117.
- Silk, Chinese, i. 348.
- Sinæ-Sinenses, the, of the Romans, i. 348.
- Si-yang-jin, Fou-lang-sai, Chinese names for the French, i. 345, 346.
- Smoking, opium. See Opium.
- Smuggler, discovery of a, i. 326.
- Smugglers in opium, vast numbers of, i. 27.
- Snuff-taking in China, i. 204. Snuff-boxes, 204.
- Social amusements of the Chinese, i. 113.
- Socialists, Chinese, of the eleventh century, ii. 58. A socialist chief of the time, 58. A great social experiment, 63.
- Societies (or houis). See Associations.
- Sohan, the priest, his mission to China, i. 137.
- Soldiers, Mantchou, i. 392, 393. Number of troops in the empire, 394, 395. Chinese soldiers, 395.
- Song, dynasty of, i. 189. Its construction of superb roads throughout the empire, 201.
- Songs, ancient Chinese (Che-king), collection of, made by Confucius, i. 124.
- Song-tche-hien, town of, i. 351. Hospitable Mandarin of, 351. His really paternal rule, 351.
- South, Mountains of the (Nan-ling), ii. 116.
- Sou-tsoung, the emperor, i. 139.
- Spring and Autumn, Book of (Tchun-tchsiou), the, of Confucius, i. 125.
- Sse, or commissioners of provinces, i. 47.
- Sse-chou, or Four Classical Books, the, i. 116.

- Sse-ma-kouang, prime minister, i. 188. ; ii. 60. His poem, "The Garden of Sse-ma-kouang," i. 189. His Annals of the Empire, 321. His ascendancy, 68. His death and magnificent funeral, ii. 68.
- Sse-ma-tsien, the Chinese historian, i. 321. His great work, 321.
- Sse-tchouen (Four Valleys), province of, i. 15. Its fertility, 20. Improvements in, under the administration of Ki-chan, 23. Extent and importance of, 288. Temperature of, 288. Fertility of, 289. Productions of, 289. Inhabitants of, 289, 290. Language of, 290. Their god of war, Kouang-ti, 290. Wells of salt and wells of fire in, 292. State of Christianity in, 302.
- Sse-ye, counsellors or pedagogues of prefectures, i. 276.
- Staunton, Sir George, his translation of the Chinese code of laws, ii. 254.
- Streets, Chinese, i. 79.
- Suffering, Chinese dread of, i. 283.
- Sugar, cultivation of the cane in the province of Sse-tchouen, i. 200. Sugar used in China, 200.
- Suicide common in China, i. 282. A frequent method of wreaking vengeance on an enemy, 282, 283.
- Superstitions of the Chinese at the appearance of the cholera, ii. 25. Chase after a soul, 212. Mode of averting the malignant influences of evil disposed spirits, 326.
- Swallows, Chinese notions respecting the migratory habits of, ii. 314.
- Tachard, Father, missionary to China, i. 147.
- Tagales, the aboriginal inhabitants of the Philippines, i. 160.
- Ta-hio, or Grand Study, the, i. 116.
- Tai-hou, or Great Lake, the, ii. 117.
- Tai-tsoung, the Emperor, his protection of the Christians in the 8th century, i. 137.
- Tao-kouang, the Emperor, i. 61. His edict in favour of Christians, 64. His death, 96. His recommendation to his subjects to despise all religions, i. 154.
- Tao-sse, or Doctors of Reason, ii. 177. Treated with neglect and contempt, 199.
- Tatars, their conquest of China, i. 98. Their military watch over the high civil functionaries, 101.
- Ta-thsin, or the Roman Empire. See Roman Empire.
- Ta-tsien-lou, town of, i. 4. Departure of M. Huc from, 6.
- Taxes, the, of China, i. 92. Those of the provinces, 100.
- Tchang river, the, ii. 363.
- Tchang-cheou-hien, town of, i. 220.
- Tchang-hi, the Emperor, his opinion of the law courts, i. 105.
- Tchao family, of the town of Leang-chan-hien, imprisonment of the head of the, i. 232. His acquittal, 243.
- Tchao-yng, the political economist, ii. 133.
- Tcheou, dynasty of, i. 349. Tcheou, the Chinese prefecture so called, i. 99. Tcheou, a second order of town, i. 36. *note*.
- Tcheou-koung, uncle of the Emperor Tching-wang, i. 349.

- Tchina, or China, origin of the word, i. 347.
- Tchinggis Khan, his invasions, ii. 69. Causes of his inundation of the world with blood, 71.
- Tching-tou-fou, city of, appearance of the suburbs of, i. 32. A Christian of, 34. Tribunal of, 35. A prefect of, 37. Persecution of Christians in, 43. Description of the city, 79. Its inhabitants, 81.
- Tching-wang, the Emperor, i. 349.
- Tchoung-hoa, or Flower of the Centre, a name for China, i. 350.
- Tchoung-king, town of, i. 205. 325.
- Tchoung-kouo, or Empire of the Centre, a name of China, i. 349.
- Tchoung-tching, town of, i. 181.
- Tchoung-young, or Invariable Centre, the book so called, i. 118.
- Tchu-hi, his elementary lessons and conversations, i. 322.
- Tchun-thsiou, or Book of Spring and Autumn, the, of Confucius, i. 125.
- Tea, ceremony of taking, i. 210. Brick-tea, 14, 15. Tea-porters, 14.
- Tembowski, M., and the Russian mission of 1821, i. 394, 395.
- Temples, religious, the magnificent, of Pou-tou, ii. 201, 202. See Pagodas.
- Te-siou, the moralist, ii. 99.
- Thang-jin, or Men of Thang, a name of China, i. 347.
- Theatre, Chinese, i. 259. 264. Universal theatrical tastes of the Chinese, 263.
- Thoung-thing Lake, the, ii. 117.
- Thsin-che-Hoang, the Emperor, his destruction of the ancient books, i. 125. His conquest of China, 347.
- Thsing-jin, or Men of Thsing, a name of China, i. 347.
- Tien-chao, the Celestial Empire, a name of China, i. 350.
- Tien-dze, or Son of Heaven, the title *par excellence* of the Emperor, i. 85.
- Tien-hia, Beneath the Heavens, a name of China, i. 350.
- Tien-men, town of, ii. 39. Visit from the Mandarins of, 40. Their attention, 40. Famed for the number and beauty of its water-melons, 41.
- Tien-tchou, the Chinese name for the idea of God, i. 158.
- Tien-tchou-kiao, the Christian religion so called, i. 158.
- Tien-té, or Celestial Virtue, the name of the present pretender to the throne, i. 86.
- Tigris river, the, appearance of, ii. 409.
- Timotheus, Patriarch of the Nestorians, his missions to China, i. 141.
- Ting, the Mandarin of the escort, i. 128. His devotion to Kao-wang, 128. Trickery of, 169. His hilarity, and the causes of it, 176. His opinion of the souls of women, 254. His dramatic performances, 261. 263. His discovery, 287. His wrath on the Blue River, 327. His fright in a tempest, 376. His vow, 376. 381. His adieu, ii. 165. His filial piety, 165.
- Titles of the Emperor, i. 85. Hereditary, do not exist except in the Imperial family and in the descendants of Confucius, 89. The titles bestowed on distinguished Mandarins, 89. Titles not hereditary, but carried back to the ancestors, 89. Ti-tou, or highest military officer, 101.
- Tobacco, the, of Leao-tong, i. 113. 203. Cultivation of, throughout the

- empire, 200, 201. Passionate fondness of the people for, 201. Called *tambakou* by the Mantchous, 203. Mark of a Pekin dealer in tobacco, 204. Snuff-taking, 204.
- Toun-tchin-sse, or Palace of Representation of Pekin, duties of, i. 94.
- Tou-tcha-yuen, or Office of Universal Censorship of Pekin, duties of, i. 94.
- Towers, ancient, of the Chinese, ii. 170.
- Towns, three orders of Chinese, i. 36. *note*. Chinese provincial, account of, 100. Uniformity of the plan of, ii. 169.
- Trade, vast internal, of China, ii. 113. Infinitesimal trade of the Chinese, 151.
- Travelling, freedom of, in China, ii. 79.
- Trial; a great trial presided over by missionaries, i. 237. Details of a Chinese, ii. 246, *et seq.*
- Tribunals, the, description of, i. 40, 48, 49.
- Tsien-tche, the political economist, extract from his writings, ii. 135, 143.
- Tse-liou-tsing, town of, i. 297. Christians of, 297.
- Tsien, a third order of town, i. 36. *note*.
- Tsing-khi-hien, town of, i. 16. Hurricanes of, 16.
- Tsoug-ping, or vice-admiral, i. 101.
- Tsoug-tou, or governor-general of a province, i. 99.
- Tze, a title bestowed upon Mandarins, i. 89.
- Vacher, M., death of, i. 4. *note*.
- Vegetable productions of China, ii. 307.
- Verbiest, Father, missionary to China, i. 146.
- Verses, Book of (Che-king), the, of Confucius, i. 124.
- Vine, culture of the, ii. 334.
- Vinegar polypus, description of the, ii. 359, 360.
- Virgins, honours paid to, i. 21.
- Visits, ceremonious. See Rites.
- Volcanoes in China, ii. 116.
- Voltaire, his picture of Chinese government, i. 83.
- Urbanity of the Chinese, i. 112.
- Wang-ngan-ché, a socialist chief of the 11th century, ii. 58. His opponent, the minister, 60. His ascendancy over the Emperor Chent-soung, 67. His expulsion from China, 70.
- War, Sovereign Court for the management of, i. 93.
- War, the, with the English, i. 400, 480.
- War-god (Kouang-ti), i. 290.
- Watchman and criers, i. 216.
- Water communications of China, ii. 147.
- Water-lily (lien-hoa), a favourite in all times in China, ii. 308, 309.
- Watson, Colonel, his introduction of opium into China, i. 28.
- Wei-chan (M. Huc's servant), his quarrel with an importunate visitor, i. 270. His proposal, 417. His attention and intelligence, ii. 165. His extravagant zeal, 243. Savings of the road bestowed on him, 416.

- Wells of salt and wells of fire, i. 292.
- Wen-tchang-koun, or Temple of Literary Composition, in Fou-ki-hien, i. 268. That of Nan-tchang-fou, ii. 365. 367.
- Wheeler, vice-president, his introduction of opium into China, i. 28.
- White lily (Pe-lien-kaio), sect of the, i. 157.
- Widows, honours paid to, i. 21.
- Wine, warm, drunk by the Chinese, i. 113. Chinese manufacture of, ii. 335, 336. Corn wine, 336. The mother of wine, 337.
- Women, Christian, of China, i. 247. Abject condition of women throughout the empire, 248, *et seq.* Polygamy, 251. The condition of women ameliorated in Chinese Christian families, 252. The Mandarin Ting's opinion of women's souls, 254. Influence of women in the conversion of nations, 256. Customs at marriages, ii. 225. *et seq.* Secondary, or "little wives," 227. Domestic unhappiness, 233. Servitude of women, 233. An affectionate husband, 235. Sect of "Abstinent Women," 237.
- Works, Public, Supreme Court of, i. 94.
- Writing, method of teaching, i. 114. Value set on fine writing, 114. History of Chinese writing, 316.
- Xavier, St. Francis de, his mission to Japan, i. 144.
- Ya-lou, river, the, ii. 113.
- Ya-me-ly-kien, "Men of the Gaudy Banner," Chinese name for the Americans, i. 346.
- Yang-ti, the Emperor, great canal of, ii. 147.
- Yang-tze-kiang, Blue River, the i. 172. Navigation of, 173. 177. 262. 275. 325. 373.; ii. 108. 117. Shipwrecks on the, 382.
- Yao-tchang, town of, i. 257. Its site, 261.
- Ya-tcheou, town of, i. 18. Riot in, 18.
- Yellow River (Hoang-ho), the, ii. 117.
- Yen-tsing, or wells of salt, i. 292.
- Y-King, or Book of Changes, the, i. 12.
- Yn mountains, ii. 113.
- Yo-King, or Book of Music, the, ii. 288.
- Young-tching, the Emperor, his persecution of the Christians, i. 148. His speech to the Jesuits in justification of his course, 156. His paternal instructions, ii. 196, 197.
- Y-sou, the priest, his mission to China, i. 138.
- Yu, or jade-stone, the, ii. 120.
- Yuen, dynasty of, its construction of the vast system of canals, i. 201.
- Yun-nan, province of, opium smuggling in, i. 27.

THE END.

A CATALOGUE OF NEW WORKS IN GENERAL LITERATURE,

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CLASSIFIED INDEX.

Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

| | Pages. |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Bsylden On valuing Rents, &c. | 4 |
| Caird's Letters on Agriculture | 5 |
| Cecil's Stud Farm | 6 |
| Loudon's Agriculture | 13 |
| " Self-Instruction | 13 |
| Low's Elements of Agriculture | 14 |
| " Domesticated Animals | 14 |

Arts, Manufactures, and Architecture.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Arnott on Ventilation | 3 |
| Bourne On the Screw Propeller | 4 |
| Brande's Dictionary of Science, &c. | 4 |
| " Organic Chemistry | 4 |
| Chevreul on Colour | 6 |
| Cresy's Civil Engineering | 7 |
| Eastlake On Oil Painting | 7 |
| Gwill's Encyclo. of Architecture | 8 |
| Jameson's Sacred & Legendary Art | 10, 11 |
| " Commonplace-Book | 10 |
| König's Pictorial Life of Luther | 8 |
| Loudon's Rural Architecture | 13 |
| Mosley's Engineering | 17 |
| Piesse's Art of Perfumery | 18 |
| Richardson's Art of Horsemanship | 18 |
| Stark's Printing | 23 |
| Steam Engine, by the Artisan Club | 4 |
| Tate on Strength of Materials | 21 |
| Ure's Dictionary of Arts, &c. | 22 |

Biography.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Arago's Autobiography | 23 |
| " Lives of Scientific Men | 3 |
| Bodenstedt and Wagner's Schamyl | 23 |
| Buckingham's (J. S.) Memoirs | 5 |
| Bunsen's Hippolytus | 6 |
| Clinton's (Fynes) Autobiography | 6 |
| Cockayne's Marshal Turenne | 23 |
| Dennistoun's Strange & Luminid | 7 |
| Forster's De Foe and Churchill | 23 |
| Haydon's Autobiography, by Taylor | 8 |
| Hayward's Hesterfield and Selwyn | 23 |
| Holcroft's Memoirs | 23 |
| " Life and Correspondence | 21 |
| Holland's (Lord) Memoirs | 12 |
| Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia | 12 |
| Maunder's Biographical Treasury | 15 |
| Memoir of the Duke of Wellington | 23 |
| Memoirs of James Montgomery | 16 |
| Merivale's Memoirs of Cicero | 15 |
| Russell's Memoirs of Moore | 19 |
| " Life of Lord Wm. Russell | 21 |
| Southey's Life of Wesley | 21 |
| " Select Correspondence | 21 |
| Stephen's Ecclesiastical Biography | 21 |
| Sydney Smith's Memoirs | 20 |
| Taylor's Loyola | 21 |
| " Wesley | 21 |
| Townsend's Eminent Judges | 22 |
| Waterson's Autobiography & Essays | 22 |
| Wheeler's Life of Herodotus | 24 |

Books of General Utility.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Acton's Cookery | 3 |
| Black's Treatise on Brewing | 4 |
| Cabinet Gazetteer | 5 |
| " Lawyer | 5 |
| Cust's Invalid's Own Book | 6 |
| Gilbart's Logic for the Million | 8 |
| Hints on Etiquette | 9 |
| How to Nurse Sick Children | 9 |
| Hudson's Executor's Guide | 10 |
| " On Making Wills | 10 |
| Kesteven's Domestic Medicine | 11 |
| Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia | 12 |
| Maunder's Treasury of Knowledge | 15 |
| " Biographical Treasury | 15 |
| " Scientific Treasury | 15 |
| " Treasury of History | 15 |
| " Natural History | 15 |
| Piesse's Art of Perfumery | 18 |
| Piscator's Cookery of Fish | 18 |
| Pocket and the Stud | 8 |
| Pycroft's English Reading | 18 |
| Reece's Medical Guide | 18 |
| Rich's Comp. to Latin Dictionary | 18 |

| | Pages. |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Richardson's Art of Horsemanship | 18 |
| Riddle's Latin Dictionaries | 18 & 19 |
| Roget's English Thesaurus | 19 |
| Rowton's Debater | 19 |
| Short Whist | 19 |
| Thomson's Interest Tables | 20 |
| Webster's Domestic Economy | 24 |
| West on Children's Diseases | 24 |
| Willich's Popular Tables | 24 |
| Wilmot's Black-stone | 24 |

Botany and Gardening.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Conversations on Botany | 6 |
| Hooker's British Flora | 9 |
| " Guide to Kew Gardens | 9 |
| " " Kew Museum | 9 |
| Lindley's Introduction to Botany | 13 |
| " Theory of Horticulture | 13 |
| Loudon's Hortus Britannicus | 13 |
| " Amateur Gardener | 13 |
| " Trees and Shrubs | 13 |
| " Gardening | 13 |
| " Plants | 13 |
| Pereira's Materia Medica | 17 |
| Rivers's Rose Amateur's Guide | 19 |
| Wilson's British Mosses | 24 |

Chronology.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Blair's Chronological Tables | 4 |
| Brewer's Historical Atlas | 4 |
| Bunsen's Ancient Egypt | 6 |
| Haydn's Bestson's Index | 9 |
| Jaquemot's Chronology | 11 |
| Johns & Nicolas' Calendar of Victory | 11 |
| Nicolas's Chronology of History | 12 |

Commerce and Mercantile Affairs.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Francis On Life Assurance | 8 |
| Francis's Stock Exchange | 8 |
| Lorimer's Young Master Mariner | 13 |
| Mac Leod's Banking | 14 |
| McCulloch's Commerce & Navigation | 14 |
| Scrivener on Iron Trade | 19 |
| Thomson's Interest Tables | 22 |
| Tooke's History of Prices | 22 |

Criticism, History, and Memoirs.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Austin's Germany | 3 |
| Blair's Chron. and Histor. Tables | 4 |
| Brewer's Historical Atlas | 4 |
| Bunsen's Ancient Egypt | 5 |
| " Hippolytus | 5 |
| Burton's History of Scotland | 5 |
| Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul | 6 |
| Eastlake's History of Oil Painting | 7 |
| Erskine's History of India | 7 |
| Francis's Annals of Life Assurance | 8 |
| Gleig's Leipzig Campaign | 23 |
| Gurney's Historical Sketches | 8 |
| Hamilton's Essays from the Edinburgh Review | 8 |
| Haydon's Autobiography, by Taylor | 8 |
| Haydon's (Lord) Whig Party | 11 |
| Jeffrey's (Lord) Contributions | 11 |
| Johns and Nicholas' Calendar of Victory | 11 |
| Kemble's Anglo-Saxons | 11 |
| Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia | 12 |
| Macaulay's Crit. and Hist. Essays | 14 |
| " History of England | 14 |
| " Speeches | 14 |
| Mackintosh's Miscellaneous Works | 14 |
| " History of England | 14 |
| McCulloch's Geographical Dictionary | 14 |
| Martineau's Church History | 15 |
| Maunder's Treasury of History | 15 |
| Memoir of the Duke of Wellington | 23 |
| Merivale's History of Rome | 15 |
| " Roman Republic | 15 |
| Milner's Church History | 16 |
| Moore's (Thomas) Memoirs, &c. | 17 |
| Mure's Greek Literature | 17 |
| Ranke's Journal | 18 |
| Ranke's Ferdinand & Maximilian | 23 |
| Rich's Comp. to Latin Dictionary | 18 |
| Riddle's Latin Dictionaries | 18 & 19 |

| | Pages. |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Rogers' Essays from Edinb. Review | 16 |
| Roget's English Thesaurus | 19 |
| Russell's (Lady Rachel) Letters | 19 |
| " Life of Lord W. Russell | 19 |
| St. John's Indian Archipelago | 19 |
| Smith's History of Greece | 19 |
| Smith's Sacred Annals | 20 |
| Southey's Doctor | 21 |
| Stephen's Ecclesiastical Biography | 21 |
| " Lectures on French History | 21 |
| Sydney Smith's Works | 20 |
| " Select Works | 23 |
| " Lectures | 20 |
| " Memoirs | 20 |
| Taylor's Loyola | 21 |
| " Wesley | 21 |
| Thirlwall's History of Greece | 22 |
| Townsend's State Trials | 22 |
| Turkey and Christendom | 23 |
| Turner's Anglo-Saxons | 22 |
| " Middle Ages | 22 |
| " Sacred Hist. of the World | 22 |
| Whitelock's Swedish Embassy | 24 |
| Wood's Crimean Campaign | 24 |
| Young's Christ of History | 24 |

Geography and Atlases.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Arrowsmith's Geogr. Dict. of Bible | 3 |
| Brewer's Historical Atlas | 4 |
| Butler's Geography and Atlases | 5 |
| Cabinet Gazetteer | 5 |
| Cornwall's Its Mines, &c. | 23 |
| Durrieu's Morocco | 22 |
| Hughes's Australian Colonies | 23 |
| Johnston's General Gazetteer | 11 |
| Lewis's English Rivers | 13 |
| McCulloch's Geographical Dictionary | 14 |
| " Russia and Turkey | 23 |
| Milner's Baltic Sea | 16 |
| " Crimea | 16 |
| " Russia | 16 |
| Murray's Encyclo. of Geography | 17 |
| Sharp's British Gazetteer | 19 |
| Wheeler's Geography of Herodotus | 24 |

Juvenile Books.

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Amy Herbert | 20 |
| Clive Hall | 20 |
| Earl's Daughter (The) | 20 |
| Experience of Life | 20 |
| Gertrude | 20 |
| Gilbart's Logic for the Young | 20 |
| Howitt's Boy's Country Book | 10 |
| " (Mary) Children's Year | 9 |
| Katharine Ashton | 20 |
| Laneton Paragonage | 20 |
| Mrs Marcell's Conversations | 15 |
| Margaret Percival | 20 |
| Pycroft's English Reading | 18 |

Medicine and Surgery.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Brodie's Psychological Inquiries | 4 |
| Bull's Hints to Mothers | 5 |
| " Management of Children | 5 |
| Copland's Dictionary of Medicine | 6 |
| Cust's Invalid's Own Book | 6 |
| Holland's Mental Physiology | 9 |
| " Medical Notes and Reflect. | 9 |
| How to Nurse Sick Children | 9 |
| Kesteven's Domestic Medicine | 11 |
| Latham On Diseases of the Heart | 11 |
| Pereira On Food and Diet | 17 |
| Pereira's Materia Medica | 17 |
| Reece's Medical Guide | 18 |
| West on Diseases of Infancy | 24 |

Miscellaneous and General Literature.

| | |
|---|----|
| Austin's Sketches of German Life | 4 |
| Carlisle's Lectures and Addresses | 23 |
| Defence of Eclipse of Faith | 7 |
| Eclipse of Faith | 7 |
| Greg's Essays on Political and Social Science | 8 |
| Hasall on Adulteration of Food | 8 |
| Harold's Book of Dignities | 8 |
| Holland's Mental Physiology | 9 |
| Hooker's Kew Gardens | 9 |

| | Pages. |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Howitt's Rural Life of England | 10 |
| " Visits to Remarkable Places | 10 |
| Jameson's Compendious Book | 10 |
| Jeffrey's (Lord) Contributions | 11 |
| Last of the Old Squires | 17 |
| Macaulay's Crit. and Hist. Essays | 14 |
| " Speeches | 14 |
| Macintosh's Miscellaneous Works | 14 |
| Memoirs of a Maitre d'Armes | 23 |
| Mattland's Church in the Catacombs | 14 |
| Martineau's Miscellanies | 15 |
| Pascal's Works, by Pearce | 17 |
| Printing: Its Origin, &c. | 23 |
| Pycroft's English Reading | 18 |
| Rich's Comp. to Latin Dictionary | 18 |
| Riddle's Latin Dictionaries | 18 & 19 |
| Rowton's Debater | 19 |
| Seward's Narrative of his Shipwreck | 19 |
| Sir Roger de Coverley | 20 |
| Smith's (Rev. Sydney) Works | 20 |
| Southey's Common-place Books | 21 |
| " The Doctor &c. | 21 |
| Souvestre's Attic Philosopher | 23 |
| " Confessions of a Working Man | 23 |
| Spencer's Psychology | 21 |
| Stephen's Essays | 21 |
| Stow's Framing System | 21 |
| Tagart on Locke's Writings | 21 |
| Thomson's Laws of Thought | 22 |
| Townsend's Case Trials | 22 |
| Willich's Popular Tables | 24 |
| Yonge's English-Greek Lexicon | 24 |
| " Latin Gradus | 24 |
| Zumpt's Latin Grammar | 24 |

Natural History in general.

| | |
|--|----|
| Catlow's Popular Conchology | 6 |
| Ephemeræ and Young on the Salmon | 7 |
| Gosse's Nat. Hist. of Jamaica | 8 |
| Kemp's Natural Hist. of Creation | 23 |
| Kirby and Spence's Entomology | 11 |
| Lee's Elements of Natural History | 11 |
| Mann on Reproduction | 15 |
| Maudslayi's Natural History | 22 |
| Turton's Shells of the British Islands | 22 |
| Waterson's Essays on Natural Hist. | 22 |
| Youatt's The Dog | 24 |
| " The Horse | 24 |

1-Volume Encyclopædias and Dictionaries.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Arrowsmith's Geogr. Dict. of Bible | 3 |
| Blaine's Rural Sports | 4 |
| Brande's Science, Literature, & Art | 4 |
| Copland's Dictionary of Medicine | 6 |
| Cresy's Civil Engineering | 6 |
| Gwill's Architecture | 8 |
| Johnston's Geographical Dictionary | 11 |
| London's Agriculture | 13 |
| " Rural Architecture | 13 |
| " Gardening | 13 |
| " Plants | 13 |
| " Trees and Shrubs | 13 |
| McCulloch's Geographical Dictionary | 14 |
| " Dictionary of Commerce | 14 |
| Murray's Encyclo. of Geography | 17 |
| Sharp's British Gazetteer | 19 |
| Ure's Dictionary of Arts, &c. | 22 |
| Webster's Domestic Economy | 22 |

Religious & Moral Works.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
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| Arrowsmith's Geogr. Dict. of Bible | 20 |
| Bloomfield's Greek Testament | 4 |
| " Annotations on do. | 4 |
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| Discipline | 7 |
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| Eclipse of Faith | 7 |
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| Englishman's Hebrew Concordance | 7 |
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| " Monastic Legends | 10 |
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| Kalisch's Commentary on Exodus | 11 |
| Katharine Ashton | 11 |
| Kippis's Hymns | 20 |
| König's Pictorial Life of Luther | 8 |

| | Pages. |
|---|--------|
| Laneton Parsonage | 20 |
| Long's Inquiry concerning Religion, | 13 |
| " Lyra Germanica | 5 |
| Maitland's Church in Catacombs | 14 |
| Margaret Percival | 14 |
| Martineau's Christian Life | 15 |
| " Church History | 15 |
| Miner's Church of Christ | 16 |
| Montgomery's Original Hymna | 16 |
| Moore On the Use of the Body | 16 |
| " " Soul and Body | 16 |
| " " Man and his Motives | 16 |
| Monomorphism | 17 |
| Neale's Closing Scene | 23 |
| " Resting Places of the Just | 17 |
| " Riches that Bring no Sorrow | 17 |
| " Risen from the Ranks | 17 |
| Newman's (J. H.) Discourses | 17 |
| Rank's Ferdinand & Maximilian | 23 |
| Readings for Lent | 20 |
| " Confirmation | 20 |
| Robins against the Roman Church | 19 |
| Robinson's Lexicon to the Greek Testament | 19 |
| Saints our Example | 19 |
| Self Denial | 19 |
| Sermon in the Mount | 19 |
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| Thomson on the Atonement | 22 |
| Thomb Bible (The) | 22 |
| Turner's Sacred History | 22 |
| Twining's Bible Types | 22 |
| Wheeler's Popular Bible Harmony | 24 |

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|------------------------------------|----|
| Arnold's Poems | 3 |
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| Flowers and their Kindred Thoughts | 11 |
| Goldsmith's Poems, illustrated | 8 |
| Kippis's Hymns | 11 |
| L. E. L.'s Poetical Works | 13 |
| Linwood's Anthologia (æoniæasis) | 13 |
| Lyra Germanica | 5 |
| Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome | 14 |
| Mac Donald's Within and Without | 14 |
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| " Original Hymns | 16 |
| Moore's Poetical Works | 16 |
| " Lalla Rookh | 16 |
| " Irish Melodies | 16 |
| " Songs and Ballads | 16 |
| Shakespeare, by Bowdler | 20 |
| " Sentiments & Similes | 10 |
| Southey's Poetical Works | 21 |
| " British Poets | 21 |
| Thomson's Seasons, illustrated | 21 |

Political Economy and Statistics.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Caird's Letters on Agriculture | 5 |
| Census of 1851 | 6 |
| Francis On Life Assurance | 6 |
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| Laing's Notes of a Traveller | 11 & 23 |
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| " London | 23 |
| " Statistics of Gt. Britain | 14 |
| Marcell's Political Economy | 15 |
| Rickards On Population & Capital | 18 |
| Tegoborski's Russian Statistics | 21 |
| Willich's Popular Tables | 24 |

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| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
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| " Popular Astronomy | 3 |
| Bourne On the Screw Propeller | 4 |
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| De la Rive's Electricity | 7 |
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| Humboldt's Aspects of Nature | 10 |
| " Cosmos | 10 |
| Hunt On Light | 10 |
| Kemp's Phisic of Matter | 11 |
| Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia | 12 |

| | Pages. |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Mann on Reproduction | 14 |
| Marcell's (Mrs.) Conversations | 14 |
| Moseley's Engineering & Architecture | 17 |
| Owen's Lectures on Comp. Anatomy | 17 |
| Our Coal Fields, and our Coal Fits | 23 |
| Pereira on Polarised Light | 17 |
| Pesche's Elements of Physics | 18 |
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| Portlock's Geology of Londonderry | 18 |
| Powell's Unity of Worlds | 18 |
| Snee's Electrical Gallery | 18 |
| Steam Engine (The) | 4 |
| Tate On Strength of Materials | 21 |
| Wilson's Electric Telegraph | 23 |

Rural Sports.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Baker's Rifle and Hound In Ceylon | 3 |
| Berkeley's Reminiscences | 4 |
| Blaine's Dictionary of Sports | 4 |
| Cecil's Stable Practice | 6 |
| " Records of the Chase | 6 |
| " Stud Farm | 6 |
| " The Cricket Field | 6 |
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| " Book of the Salmon | 7 |
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| Stable Talk and Table Talk | 8 |
| Stonchone On the Greyhound | 21 |
| The Stud, for Practical Purposes | 8 |

Veterinary Medicine, &c.

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Cecil's Stable Practice | 6 |
| " Stud Farm | 6 |
| Hunting Field (The) | 6 |
| Miles's Horse-Shoeing | 16 |
| Pocket and the Stud | 8 |
| Practical Horsemanship | 8 |
| Richardson's Horsemanship | 18 |
| Stable Talk and Table Talk | 8 |
| Stud (The) | 8 |
| Youatt's The Dog | 24 |
| " The Horse | 24 |

Voyages and Travels.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Allen's Dead Sea | 3 |
| Baines's Vaudois of Piedmont | 23 |
| Baker's Wanderings in Ceylon | 3 |
| Barrow's Continental Tour | 23 |
| Barton's Medina and Mecca | 6 |
| Carlière's Turkey and Greece | 6 |
| De Custine's Russia | 23 |
| Duherly's Journal of the War | 7 |
| Eothen | 23 |
| Ferguson's Swiss Travels | 23 |
| Forester's Rambles in Norway | 23 |
| Gronière's Philippines | 23 |
| Gregorovius's Corsica | 23 |
| Hill's Travels in Siberia | 9 |
| Hope's Brittany and the Bible | 23 |
| " Chase in Brittany | 23 |
| Howitt's Art-Student in Munich | 9 |
| " (W.) Victoria | 10 |
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| Hue and Gabel's Tartary & Thibet | 23 |
| Hughes's Australasian Colonies | 23 |
| Humboldt's Aspects of Nature | 10 |
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| Kenard's Eastern Tour | 11 |
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| Laing's Norway | 23 |
| " Notes of a Traveller | 11 & 23 |
| Marryat's California | 15 |
| Mason's Zulus of Natal | 23 |
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| Miles's Rambles in Iceland | 23 |
| Osborn's North West Passage | 17 |
| Pfeiffer's Voyage round the World | 23 |
| " Second ditto | 18 |
| Richardson's Arctic Boat Voyage | 18 |
| Seward's Narrative | 19 |
| St. John's (H.) Indian Archipelago | 19 |
| " (Hon. F.) Rambles | 19 |
| Sutherland's Arctic Voyage | 21 |
| Weld's United States and Canada | 24 |
| Werne's African Wanderings | 23 |
| Wheeler's Travels of Herodotus | 24 |
| Young's Christ of History | 24 |

Works of Fiction.

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Arnold's Oakfield | 3 |
| Lady Willoughby's Diary | 24 |
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